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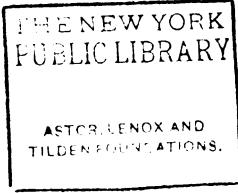


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MEMORIES OF GARDENS





C. W. Shantz home, from 1879 to 1907.
Culmbridge

MEMORIES OF GARDENS

BY

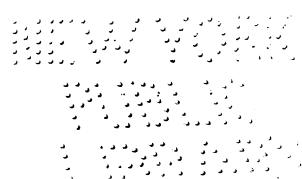
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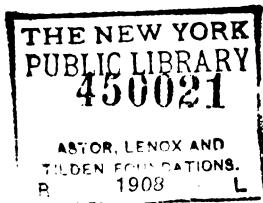
**WITH A MEMOIR BY THE
RIGHT HON. SIR ROWLAND BLENNERHASSETT BART. LL.D.**

**WITH TWO PORTRAITS
AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY D. S. MACCOLL, W. ALISTER MACDONALD
ELIZABETH BLANCHE SHAND, AND DONALD MACLAREN**

**LONDON
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NOTE

ALL the papers in this book have been published in the 'Saturday Review' during the last ten years with the exception of 'The Eighteenth-Century Squire.' That was found in manuscript lying loose in Mr. Shand's study. It had evidently been written but a short time before his death, and appears to be part of an unfinished series of which one other, 'The Parson,' was nearly complete. Early last year we had discussed with Mr. Shand the suggestion of reprinting a selection of his more recent contributions to the 'Saturday Review,' and he seemed very much to like the idea. It is sad, indeed, that the book should eventually turn out to be a kind of memorial. What I looked forward to as a pleasure has become almost as much a pain.

I have much pleasure in expressing my thanks to Miss Streatfeild, Mr. Shand's sister-in-law and executrix, for her kindness in allowing us to make use of his papers, to Miss E. Janet Campbell Colquhoun, Mr. Shand's neighbour and intimate friend, for very real assistance in bringing out this book and allowing us to reproduce her quite wonderfully life-like photograph, to Sir Rowland Blennerhassett for kindly writing a memoir, and finally to the cousin of Mr. Shand, Mrs. Forbes-Irvine of Straloch and Barra Castle, whose hospitable kindness made Mr. MacColl's task of drawing

those two haunts of our author as easy as it could be in the rigour of an arctic Easter.

Sir Rowland Blennerhassett knew Mr. Shand all his life, so that any addition would be an impertinence on my part, who knew him only during the last ten years of his life. But I knew Shand long enough to love him. I have never known a more delightful companion or more pleasant talker. He had a way of suddenly turning up in London and snatching one off to luncheon at some club, usually the Wyndham. These tête-à-tête luncheons with him are things not to be forgotten. Surely no man ever so strikingly refuted the old saw that youth and age (not 'crabbed' age) cannot live together.

HAROLD HODGE.

M E M O I R

INTELLIGENT readers of the Essays contained in this book will catch a glimpse of a strong, beautiful, and many-sided character. Mr. Alexander Innes Shand was a man of remarkable gifts, which, added to an intimate acquaintance with many distinguished men and an extensive and varied knowledge of several countries, made him a most interesting person, quite apart from the many sterling qualities which endeared him to his friends. In a charming book entitled ‘Days of the Past’ he has left admirable sketches of Leslie Stephen, Cook of the ‘Saturday,’ George Meredith, Laurence Oliphant, Blowitz, Mowbray Morris, John Blackwood, Sir Robert Morier, Kinglake, and other persons of light and leading. Delane and Chenery, successive editors of the ‘Times,’ were his friends, and so was Mr. Buckle, the present editor. The account he has left of Delane is particularly fascinating and important. His intimate relations with Sir Edward Hamley render all that he has written about that eminent soldier also of abiding value. Hamley, when the small faults of his character and the trivial disputes of

the generation in which he lived are forgotten, will be remembered as in many respects one of the most distinguished men, and certainly one of the greatest military writers, of Queen Victoria's reign.

Alexander Innes Shand was born at the 'Burn,' Fettercairn, a beautiful place in Forfarshire, on July 2, 1832. His parents at that time were exceedingly well off. His father had a considerable estate in Demerara. Owing, however, to the reckless and ill-considered manner in which slavery was abolished, and the consequent depreciation of West Indian property, the Shands, like many other families, experienced a great change for the worse in their financial position. They left their country place and went to live at Aberdeen. Alexander attended the University of that city, and afterwards passed for the Bar in Edinburgh. He at one time thought of going into the Army, and undoubtedly possessed many qualities requisite for success in a military career. He was offered a commission in the 12th Bengal Cavalry, but renounced the idea because his mother could not bear to part with him. He then took to the Law. His mother died in 1855, some years after his father, and Shand then travelled a great deal. When in the United Kingdom he stayed usually at Straloch, a place owned by his cousin, John Ramsay, who was a major in the Royal Aberdeenshire Highlanders. This gentleman, till he died in 1895, was the most intimate of his friends. Shand lived during some

years the life of a sportsman. He was an ardent fisherman and a good shot. He reached a turning-point in his life in 1864, when he met Miss Elizabeth Blanche Streatfeild at Pau. At that time he had sufficient money to amuse himself, but not enough to enable him to marry. He resumed his legal studies, became an advocate of the Scotch Bar, and in 1865 married Miss Streatfeild and settled in Edinburgh. It, however, became clear that his wife was unable to stand the rigours of the northern climate. He left Edinburgh, settled at Sydenham, and his work as a lawyer came to an end. It was at about this time that he fortunately discovered the power of his pen. His first connection with literature was on the occasion of the coming of age of a cousin. A dinner was given to this young man by his tenants. Shand had to propose the Press, coupled with the name of the reporter of a county paper. Referring to reviews of books, he said that he always found it a personal grievance to have to cut their pages. Most readers of new books will, I think, heartily sympathise with this grievance; although I know some persons who say that it gives them a feeling of excitement. The reporter, in reply, said that Shand would have better reason for grumbling if he had to 'cut up' books as a reviewer. Shand remarks on this that the reporter had the best of it, and as Mrs. Gamp would have said, 'his words was prophesy.' He goes on to say that

during his life the pleasure and pain which he experienced in criticising books were pretty evenly balanced; he adds, 'I have waded through considerable muddy water and endured more drudgery than was altogether agreeable.' Just this last remark seems to me to call for some notice. Shand no doubt wrote because he liked that occupation, but he was led to it by a desire of increasing his income. Literature, it has been said, is an excellent stick, but a bad crutch. This saying does not in the financial sense apply to Shand. It does apply, however, to some extent to his literary position. His talents were certainly remarkable, and if he had used them more carefully he might have obtained a commanding position in literature. He had some of the gifts of Sainte-Beuve, but the nature of his work forced him to write too rapidly, and sometimes the productions of his pen were not remarkable for condensed thought or sustained diction. On the other hand, as he once admitted to me, he was so passionately fond of reading and of field sports that, had it not been for pressure, he probably would never have written at all. His range of reading was very wide, but he knew certain authors thoroughly, and this accurate knowledge gave him great strength. Among the writers of his own time his special favourite was Dickens. I have often had pleasant conversations with Shand about that distinguished writer, all the more delightful perhaps from the circum-

stance that I never could quite agree with his estimate of Dickens. I was, however, in thorough agreement with him in his veneration for Scott, whose writings I think he knew almost by heart. On one of the last occasions when I met him we compared ‘The Bride of Lammermoor’ with ‘Romeo and Juliet.’ The striking manner in which the idea governing both these masterpieces is handled in ‘The Bride of Lammermoor’ seemed to us unsurpassed in modern literary history, and to be, as I insisted, Æschylean in grandeur. I pleased Shand by pointing out to him the passage in Sir Henry Maine where he speaks of ‘The Bride of Lammermoor’ as ‘that immortal Romance.’

When Shand married, his wife was only nineteen. She was a beautiful and gifted lady, but an invalid all her married life. She shared, however, all his interests, and when he lost her in 1882 he never recovered from the blow. From that time he became more and more of a recluse. He used to come up to London from Oakdale, the place where they had settled in Kent, generally on a Tuesday, arranged to meet a few friends at lunch at the Athenæum, and devoted the afternoon to literary business with publishers and editors. At home he read all the morning. After his lunch, which consisted of three or four biscuits, grated Parmesan cheese and a glass of sherry, he spent some hours writing. About five or six o’clock, in winter or summer, in storm or sunshine, he invariably went for a walk. He was deterred

by neither cold nor wet. In the summer he generally took with him a pocket volume of Shakespeare. In the dark evenings of winter his tall figure, always accompanied by his dogs, was a familiar apparition in the roads and lanes about his home, and for some years will be missed by the people of the place, for whom he always had a kind word and a friendly greeting. He was Epicurean in his tastes, liking everything simple but of the best. He was very liberal in his gifts, devoted to children, keenly appreciating and never forgetting any acts of kindness, extremely fond of animals, and in the memoranda of his will he specially desired that his favourite mare and his dogs should be cared for. In religious matters Shand was a large-hearted man, but a decided Evangelical. He belonged, indeed, to the Episcopal Church of Scotland, but repudiated for himself all High Church or Catholic doctrines, and was impatient of ritualists and ritual. He carried this so far that he objected to the singing of the Psalms in church. He had, however, a profound intellectual contempt for the assertions of shallow infidelity. The day before his death he told one of his friends that he was perfectly at peace, relying not on any merits of his own, but solely on the Atonement ; and on the same day he said to an old and devoted servant, ‘ They tell me it will be three or four days. I am ready. I do not fear death. It is only a matter of detail.’ These sentiments are almost identical with those

expressed to Outram by the dying Havelock. In politics Shand was an unbending Tory. The cant of Liberalism and of Humanitarianism was simply odious to that extremely kind-hearted man. He rejoiced greatly at the formation of the Unionist party, and never forgave Mr. Chamberlain for what he considered reckless action in breaking that great instrument of government. Shand added to an intense love for his native land of Scotland a high and keen appreciation of the imperial mission of the United Kingdom. I remember the vigour with which in conversation he often used to criticise that weak, sentimental, doctrinaire policy in India which was set spinning on its career of mischief at the time when Lord Ripon was a tin god in his fool's paradise. If Shand were alive now I can imagine how, in his sing-song Scottish brogue, he would express with a mocking laugh his grim satisfaction that Lord Ripon has lived to be a member of a Government and to remain in office while his colleagues have been forced to abandon the policy of paltering with sedition. The Administration of which he is now a member is being forced by circumstances to return to legislation against the vernacular press similar to that enacted by Lord Lytton's Government in 1878, recklessly denounced by Mr. Gladstone during the Midlothian campaign, and recklessly repealed by Lord Ripon in 1880.

Shand first began to write for the Press in

the winter of 1867, and he gives an account of the circumstances which led him to do so in his chapter on Literary Recollections in 'Days of the Past.' He saw one morning the announcement of a new Conservative weekly, the 'Imperial Review,' which invited contributions, and wrote to the editor forwarding articles on Turkey and America. He knew very little about America, but he had been in Turkey twelve years previously and had joined shooting parties in various parts of that empire. Both the articles were highly appreciated, and their appearance formed a turning-point in the life of Shand. Some little time afterwards the 'Imperial Review' came to an end, but Shand had acquired a capital practice by writing a couple of articles a week, and had also made arrangements for the future. During a visit to Cambridge, he made the acquaintance in the Trinity Combination-room one evening of Leslie Stephen, whom he had observed in the morning in a state of great excitement, coaching the boat of Trinity Hall. Stephen gave him introductions to Cook of the 'Saturday,' and Frederick Greenwood of the 'Pall Mall.' The late Lord Salisbury was one of the chief contributors to the 'Saturday.' Sir William Harcourt, Stephen, and Venables were also regular contributors, and the writings of Oxenham on ecclesiastical subjects were widely and eagerly read. Shand describes his first interview with *Mr. Cook*, and the nervousness he experienced

when calling on the great editor in his rooms in the Albany. He was, however, soon put at his ease by the charm of Cook's conversation and the kindness of his reception. He welcomed Shand to the society of the 'Saturday,' and when shortly afterwards he was gathered to his fathers and was succeeded by Harwood, the relations of Shand to the 'Saturday' continued as before. His description of them in 'Days of the Past' are among the most charming pages of the book. About the same time Mr. Greenwood of the 'Pall Mall' encouraged him to write for that newspaper. He says of Mr. Greenwood (and I am not at all surprised at his remark) that 'with his versatile tastes and rare literary flair and discrimination, with perhaps a single exception, he was the ablest editor I have ever known.' It is plain from other parts of this chapter that the exception was Delane. Delane's intuitive perception and sagacious prescience of the tendency of events, joined to a marvellous promptness of decision, made a deep impression upon Shand. Delane had the greatest contempt for feebleness of moral fibre. He had become editor of the 'Times' at the age of twenty-four. One day Shand asked him whether, when he obtained that appointment, his courage was not shaken. 'Not a bit of it,' was the reply; 'what I dislike about you young fellows is that you all shrink from responsibility'—which is, as Shand remarks, almost word for word a criticism made by Wellington,

somewhat unjustly, on his subordinates in the Peninsula. Shand's activity in literature only ceased with his death. Two days before it took place he posted a review to the 'Westminster Gazette,' which appeared the day after he died. Two hours before he passed away he gave orders for certain books which he had been asked to review to be sent back to their owners, examining carefully the books himself to ensure that the right ones were returned. His contributions to the 'Times' were always solid and occasionally brilliant. He sent articles at various times from Ireland and the Continent, and wrote many of those biographies of distinguished men for which the 'Times' is famous. One of the most remarkable was that of Napoleon III. The Emperor lay dying. Delane sent four printed columns of the biography written several years before to Shand, telling him at the same time to complete it at his convenience. Shand took him at his word, and leisurely proceeded to look up the memorable events of the previous ten years and to turn over in his mind the tragic circumstances which led to the capitulation of Sedan and to the fall of the Empire. One day Shand went out shooting and came back late in the afternoon tired, contemplating a quiet evening's rest, when he found a messenger from Delane was waiting. Napoleon III. had died, and the Memoir must appear the next morning. Shand instantly ran up to London, and at half-

past eight was sitting in a room in Printing House Square writing against time, with perpetual interruptions from boys bringing up proofs to be promptly revised. At half-past ten Delane appeared and remarked, 'Ah! you have done nothing to those four columns.' But he was careful, anxious as he must have been, not to worry Shand. The Memoir was completed in time, and very ably done. I remember reading it at Munich, and I recollect the high and universal praise it received throughout Germany and the Austrian Empire. It was Shand also who wrote the obituary memoir of Lord Beaconsfield, in which Delane took great personal interest, and for which he supplied much interesting information. Delane, however, did not live to see this publication, for he preceded Lord Beaconsfield to the tomb.

Besides his contributions to the papers, Shand published several works of interest and value. I am inclined to think that on the whole his 'Wellington's Lieutenants' is the best of these books. He had the advantage of talking over the personalities he describes with his friend Hamley, and I had the privilege of being present on more than one occasion when Hamley explained to Shand incidents in Wellington's campaign in the Peninsula. He it was who made Shand appreciate Craufurd. Shand's sketch of that General, notwithstanding some omissions, is most remarkable, and is one of the best accounts to be found in a few pages of that hard-fighting and

intrepid soldier. It is only surpassed by Professor Oman's masterly analysis of Craufurd's military qualities in his 'History of the Peninsular War.' Shand brings out with great literary skill that Craufurd personifies the romance of the Peninsular war. The fortunes of that war depended on the skill with which outpost service was performed, and Wellington chose Craufurd for that important duty. That dashing leader of the Light Division became the soul of the Field Intelligence Department. The account Shand gives of Craufurd's death will compare in vividness with some of the grandest pages in English military history. On January 19, 1812, Wellington issued those memorable orders which closed with the sentence, 'Ciudad Rodrigo must be stormed this evening.' The Light Division was to take a prominent part, and it formed up when 'dusk was just turning to dark.' Craufurd addressed a few spirited words to his troops, exhorted them to be steady, cool, and firm in the assault, and then led them to the breach. Shand tells the story of the storm with a condensed clearness exceptional in such accounts. Craufurd stood, as at Bussaco, in the thickest of the tempest, shouting his directions and instructions to his troops. Suddenly a ball passed through his arm, then through his body and lodged in the spine. Sir James Shaw Kennedy half dragged, half carried him to a place where he was out of the direct line of fire, and he was ultimately taken into the town.

Wellington was unremitting in his inquiries, but there was no hope. In such circumstances burial follows fast on death, and before Craufurd had passed away, his coffin was 'knocked together.' He was buried at night, like Sir John Moore, on the spot which will for ever be associated with his fame. There has not often been a more impressive ceremony. The coffin was carried by six rugged veterans, all of them in tears. The men of the Light Division followed, also deeply moved. 'If we remember,' says Shand, 'what those veterans had gone through and how hardened they had become to death and suffering, no soldier ever received a more impressive tribute.'

The sketches of Hill, of Picton, of Marshal Beresford, of Lord Lynedoch, of the Earl of Hopetoun, of the Marquis of Anglesey, of Lord Combermere, are powerful and attractive. One might as well attempt to write the account of the siege of Londonderry after Lord Macaulay as describe Albuera after Sir William Napier. Shand does not make the attempt, but quotes the famous passage which begins with the description of 'how the fusilier battalions, struck by the iron tempest, first reeled and staggered like sinking ships,' then suddenly recovering charged to capture the French position on the height. At last, in spite of shot and shell and heroic resistance, '1,500 unwounded men, the remnant of 6,000 unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill.'

Shand shows judgment, literary skill, and impartiality in his estimate of Beresford. He is inclined to wonder at the confidence which Wellington reposed in him when it was neither a question of disciplining raw levies nor of feeding troops. The Duke, although he often said that Beresford was not a great general, certainly regarded him as worthy of trust. I remember when I was a boy an old gentleman, long since departed, giving me an account of an interview he had had one morning with Wellington at Apsley House. The Duke, standing before a picture of Beresford, spoke in an unusually enthusiastic strain for him about the qualities of the Marshal. As Shand remarks, the Duke well knew how to choose his instruments, 'and we can only assume that the fighting and hospitable Irishman has been somewhat unfairly treated in military narrative.'

'*Soldiers of Fortune*' was his last book. The first copies arrived at Oakdale the day after his death. This volume, though interesting, is hardly equal to that on '*Wellington's Lieutenants*'. The most striking of these portraits is that of Marshal Saxe, who, however, was inferior to Prince Eugene. Eugene was equally remarkable as a man of letters and as a diplomatist, and the brightness of his genius as a statesman almost dims the glory of his military triumphs. Shand's other military writings, his Lives of Sir Edward Hamley and General John Jacob, are interesting and instructive, particularly that of Hamley, who,

as I have already mentioned, was his intimate friend.

The novels written by Shand, 'Against Time' and 'Shooting the Rapids,' show indisputable ability. 'Shooting the Rapids' is full of the experiences of a cultivated man of the world, revealing considerable powers of observation, a cultured style, and a capacity for vivid description which reminds the reader of Stevenson and even occasionally of Scott.

In reading the various productions of Shand I have come to the conclusion that the time he devoted to journalistic work was the reason why he did not rise to a much higher position in literature than that which he attained. He was quite without ambition. He never took notes, and relied for his work on the resources of a memory extraordinarily retentive. The books and articles he wrote ceased to interest him when his manuscripts went to the printers, and his absence of vanity made him negligent in correcting proofs. His contributions, however, to the 'Times' and to the 'Saturday Review' will bear comparison with those of such distinguished men as Lowe and Mozley, the late Lord Salisbury, Venables, and all that brilliant band of which Mr. Goldwin Smith is now almost the sole survivor.

It appears to me that Shand's 'Days of the Past,' with its Stevensonian geniality and love of all sorts and conditions of men and things, is on the whole the most interesting of his books. In

reading it one realises the charm, the versatility, and the exceptionally high character of its author. He was a man of unflinching courage, and, where his heart was concerned, of singular patience and gentleness. These combined qualities produced a character of extraordinary firmness and loyalty. Everything concerning his friends was of importance to him, and he never lost an opportunity of forwarding their interests. Few really strong men, as Shand was, possess such ample sympathies. An Evangelical, he could enter into the feelings of Roman Catholics and High Churchmen. A sportsman interested in the preservation of game, he could sympathise with the poacher in so far as he too was a sportsman and an adventurer. This is shown in his fascinating description of Duncan Mackay, a thoroughbred Scotch poacher. One dark evening in autumn Duncan lost his way in the gloaming and the mist. Suddenly he heard groans. Being extremely superstitious his first impulse was to take to flight, but he summoned up his courage, muttered a prayer, and went in the direction of the sound. He discovered the proprietor of the estate on whose land he was poaching lying badly hurt from a fall. Duncan came to his assistance, thereby probably saving his life. As a reward Duncan was allowed free sport over the estate. But this friend of Shand's became from that day a saddened and a chastened man. He gave up his rod and his gun and fell away in the flesh, and at last in his old age he

asked his landlord for sufficient money to take him to Canada. As he could poach no more in his own country he was obliged at the age of seventy to seek in a new land the excitement and adventure without which his soul was starved. Another friend of Shand's of the same description lived in my native county of Kerry. I also knew him very well indeed. This man was born on a certain Kerry estate and was engaged as a supernumerary on the keeper's staff. One day he enlisted, went to India, and after twenty-one years' service came back with a pension and settled in a cottage on the old estate. He had free quarters and the run of the kitchen in his landlord's house. His own cottage was a model of cleanliness and order. He had always remained intensely attached to the family who owned the estate, and was particularly devoted to the landlord, who just after the old soldier had laid down his arms came of age. The pensioner showed his affection by fishing the best pools of the salmon river, regardless of every consideration. He invariably, however, took his catch to the landlord's house 'with his compliments.' The landlord expostulated, argued, and sometimes swore, pointing out that the best water was often spoilt for his guests. To this he received as a reply, 'Sure, your honour, if I knew that you or any of the company were to be out, it's always glad and willing I would be to lave the pools for ye.' Shand expresses his fear that this sort of character is

passing away. If that fear is really justified, I must say I share his regret. Besides such friends as the Scotch and Kerry poachers, Shand had a large acquaintance with coach drivers, guards, guides, and railway porters, and was quite as much at home in their company as he was in that of the scholars, soldiers, men of letters, politicians, and statesmen whom he used to meet in his London clubs.

Shand died at Oakdale on September 20, 1907, and his remains were laid beside those of his wife in the Kentish churchyard close by : one of those localities, like the cemetery in Rome where Keats and Shelley rest, of which it has been said, ‘It would almost make one in love with death to be buried in so sweet a place.’ Shand was most regarded by those who knew him best, and to them his memory will remain always green. They can never forget the singular combination in him of strong personal convictions with large-minded and large-hearted tolerance. Evangelical though he was, and holding firmly the creed which was the consolation and guide of Havelock and ‘Stonewall’ Jackson, I feel confident that he would not object to my closing this notice in the prayer of a Church whose doctrines he repudiated, ‘Requiescat in Pace.’

ROWLAND BLENNERHASSETT.

MEMORIES OF GARDENS

CHAPTER I

I. MY GARDEN AND AVIARY

ONE naturally owes Adam a grudge for the indiscretion which had such fatal consequences. Yet we cannot help pitying him for his summary expulsion from the garden he had scarcely time to enjoy. Many a wistful glance he must have cast at the guarded gate of the forfeited Eden. After all on reflection we are not sure that enjoyment of our gardens has not grown with the Fall. The Prince de Ligne, the war-worn veteran, who had passed his long life in camps and courts, proclaiming his passionate taste for flowers, declared it was impossible for any evildoer to share it. He adds that it is the only one which keeps pace with the advancing years, where a man, day by day, casts off his cares and lays in reserves of strength for the morrow. Multitudes of men have like the Prince sought their garden as the place of rest, and in

the work and worries of a strenuous life it brings soothings anticipations of future repose.

But it is the Prince who has betrayed me into a sombre cast of thought, which is the very reverse of the abiding sentiment. Flowers will fade, and leaves fall in autumn, but all the associations with the garden are of the brightest and cheeriest, with its endless beauties and its ever-changing attractions and distractions. I love the great garden of an old country house, with its wealth of flower-beds, its mazes of shrubbery, and its profusion of fruit and vegetables running to waste. But I have made myself very happy in a tiny enclosure on the suburban heights of Norwood, a preserve of squalling cats in the night-time, but in spring-tide a little enchanted realm, with the lights on the bloom of the Judas-tree and the yellow tresses of a solitary laburnum. When you had passed the day in the turmoil of Piccadilly or the Strand, though in that happier age there were no motor-cars, the transition from the smoke and rush was Elysian. It mattered nothing then if you were overlooked by the neighbours you did not know, yet the intimate charm of the garden is seclusion. Size is a matter of secondary consideration ; indeed, to my mind, the nearest approach to perfection is to be found in the concentration which feigns expanse. I think it was the Hon. Robert Spencer, before his elevation to the peerage, who prefaced

a speech in the House with the remark that he was not an agricultural labourer, for whom no one could possibly have mistaken him. I am not a large landowner with a show place, but I have a small Kentish garden with which I am perfectly content. Nor am I a landscape gardener even in petto, and I take no credit for laying it out. I am blessed with an invaluable and most intelligent aide who has an instinct in that line amounting to genius. Moreover, he has the greed of acquisition with the gift of foraging, and though sometimes commissioned to nurseries and sales, he laid all the neighbours under involuntary contribution. Seldom has a tiny pleasure-ground been started more economically. It has great natural advantages, for it is surrounded by meadow and woodland, and embowered on one side by secular oaks. Through vistas in the woods it overlooks the weald, and the view is bounded on the south by the range of downs, stretching from the heights behind Reigate to Eridge and Tunbridge Wells. Overhung by hop-gardens, it is sheltered by a bolder range from the north and east. The soil is light loam, with a blend of the upper sand and the lower clay, and the exposure is exceptionally sunny. If there were parochial prizes for early asparagus and strawberries I should always be well forward in the running. Thirty-five years ago the garden was a bare sloping bank, carrying a flourishing

crop of mangold wurzel. The slope, as I found, was sadly deceptive when we came to lay the foundations of the house, and now if an elderly man feels out of condition it is a stiff pull to the terraces from the paddock below. I spoke of asparagus. Before a stone was laid or a spade struck in elsewhere, we laid out the two big beds of asparagus, a vegetable for which I have a special predilection. I hate the bleached products of the forcing-beds which I used once to admire in Chevet's windows in the Palais Royal, but seldom care to trifle with at a London dinner. Give me the green asparagus which makes no show and wants a finger-glass, which you can eat down to the finger-tips, and, above all, let there be no stint. Nor are the beds unsightly when the cutting for the table is over, for they are covered with a canopy of graceful sprays. This is digression, but one is always digressing in the garden.

The sloping of the ground demanded terraces, and as a necessary consequence the construction of a verandah. When I saw it first, for I left the superintendence to others, I was shocked and scandalised by the supports. They were wooden columns like the pillars of a venerable four-poster bedstead. That, however, was easily remedied. Now they are draped in masses of Japanese honeysuckle, which grows quickly, flowers rather expensively, but when it does flower is fragrant beyond the perfume of the honeycomb. The

verandah is a delightful place for a book of a summer forenoon : dodging the sunshine behind the Japanese screens, with a pencil in your teeth and a paper-knife handy. The drawback is that, with the poplars and spruces on the eastern side, it darkens the dining-room. That cannot be helped, for as the hamlet is only a field away, a screen was indispensable when they took to grubbing a hop-garden. Nothing shoots up like a spruce, except a poplar. Scott, who knew something of arboriculture, said that the great mistake of the planter was to starve plantations on a hungry soil. Pick your trees, give them a fair chance, and you can almost see them growing. In five-and-thirty years these poplars and spruces have almost overtopped the house, and yet the poplars have been regularly pollarded to shut out sights and deaden sounds. I can faintly hear the grind of the motor-cars—happily motoring is discouraged by a long, stiff hill, with an ugly turn at the bottom—but I never catch a glimpse of those horrors and terrors. The other trees embowering the garden have done as well in their degrees. The pink and white thorns have gnarled trunks, already showing the wrinkles of age ; and umbrageous acacias, beloved of the fly-catchers, shed showers of their milk-white blossoms on the grass. The deciduous shrubs, the cypresses, and the puzzle-monkeys give nothing to complain of, though I have no great partiality for them. I

love birds, and I agree with Richard Jefferies that our songsters are not fond of nesting in foreign evergreens. In my little place the birds can afford to be fastidious. Under the great oaks in the corner of the sloping paddock below the garden the fallen acorns intermingled with the beech-mast have grown into thickets never touched by the axe or pruning-hook. Indeed the self-sown oaks have straggled into the orchard and garden to the disgust of the gardener. At first I hoped to turn the paddock to account. But a stop was soon put to my hay-making, by which I lost at least a sovereign per annum, and my mare when turned out had a habit of leaping the fence and cantering up to the stable through the flower-beds, so now beneath that silvan shade is a matted undergrowth of bramble and dog-rose. Hard by is a tall thicket of weedy birches, the story of which is that when we were speculating in timber my emissary picked up a lot of young birches for a song. I was puzzled to know what to do with them, and so they were stuck in together beside the vegetable marrows. So with the incidental manuring the outcasts shot up, and now with their pendant tresses and shimmering white bark bring memories of the Highlands and hard fights with the loch trout.

Though I had nothing whatever to say to it, I flatter myself that the lawn is laid out artistically. Talking of small things as great, there is

a broad expanse of turf, shaved regularly each Saturday through the season. The flower-beds, fringed with the geraniums which follow the pansies, forget-me-nots, &c., encircle the grass but do not encroach. Consequently there is nothing to distract the eye from the copses in the middle perspective and the downs in the distance. The sole exception is the circular rosary to the right, and even that is blushing modestly beyond a thorn and one quarter hidden. The walks between the shrubbery and the hedge of the kitchen garden are lined with the flowers that love the shade—auriculas and polyanthus, gentianellas and lobelias. The gentianellas, by the way, are the despair of my neighbours. They came from Aberdeenshire, acclimated themselves kindly, and this is the only garden in the locality where they thrive. En revanche, time after time, I have imported lilies-of-the-valley from the north, where they flourish miraculously. Whether we try the shade or the sunshine, with us they are always a failure.

I can indulge my passion for colour and perfume in the broad walk that traverses the vegetable garden. I delight in the old-fashioned flowers that flourish in the cottage garden, and the seasons bring a succession of them. Some have colour without scent, but most have scent with colour as well. The snapdragon and the dahlia represent the one, the sweet-pea and the

clove carnation the other. For the gaudy dahlias I never had much liking, though they are useful as earwig-traps—a search in the flower-pots on the top of the poles is a happy riddance after rain. Lupins and irises and gladiolas make a glorious show, and the foxgloves which flourish in the neighbouring copses, with their drifting seeds will sometimes sow a bed of themselves on the borders of the orchard. Early in the summer come the pinks—literally pinks—in inexhaustible clusters of single flowers, twin blossoms, and triplets ; then follow the white picotees, more expansive and almost as prolific, but scarcely so odiferous. And these lead on to the carnations, carefully reared from cuttings and tied up, with as many varieties of colouration as the sweet-peas, though the clove with its real ‘carnation’ and rich fragrance is easily the first. Some of the best of these carnation cuttings come from Holland, whence we have the ranunculus and the hyacinth. The bulbs degenerate and must be renewed by relays each spring. Some are for the flower-beds, others are potted in the conservatory, to fill the sitting-rooms with their perfume in the blustering days of our Aprils and Mays. The bulbs of the second and third year are planted out to take their chance and fill blanks in the borders. For a stand-by that goes on flowering the more persistently you pluck it, there is nothing like the good old-fashioned stock. When familiar with it

you find that the smell varies with the colour, and the white is my special favourite. I always associate it with orthodox churchgoing. Like the old ladies who used to go to service with their bunches of thyme or southernwood, I generally take a flower to church, and the white stock has helped me pleasantly through many a drowsy discourse. Nor should we forget the modest mignonette, scattered broadcast between the standard roses with their fashionable French names and the untrimmed bushes of the old cabbage and celestial. I have thought of converting part of that walk into a pergola, but have hitherto refrained. The pergola is more appropriate to the cloudless skies of the South, to villas basking on the banks of the Italian lakes or the shores of the Bay of Naples. In the drip of our climate it serves imperfectly as an umbrella, and we seldom want it as a sunshade. And after all, with the verandah and the walls of the house, you have a more rational substitute for the support of climbers and creepers. The north side and the wall of the stable-yard is matted with 'that rare old plant the ivy green' which loves the dark and the damp, and is beloved of the sparrows and titmice.

Turning the north-east corner is a Virginian creeper—*Ampelopsis Veitchii* is its botanical name—which covers two sides of the house, festooning the windows, intermingled here and

there with white or purple clematis, and striking its searching tendrils into the interstices of every brick. On the ground floor on the east are white and yellow jasmine, then come those verandah bedposts buried out of sight in the Japanese honeysuckle, and between a great bay window and the conservatory door are pendant masses of the purple wistaria. In those creepers you can mark the course of time and the changes of the seasons. The ivy with its yew-like suggestions of the churchyard is always with us in the rank fulness of foliage. The yellow jasmine¹ keeps up a good heart with shivering flowers in the depth of winter. The wistaria with its pea-like scent heralds the advent of summer, and the Virginian creeper with its scarlets and sepias is never more gorgeous than when the year is on the decline. But à propos of the colour, to which, as I said, I am comparatively indifferent when divorced from scent, I had almost forgotten the transformation scene, the event of the year to the anxious gardener, when with the passing of the night frosts the geraniums go from the frames to the potting-shed and thence to form those bright fringes to the flower-beds which modestly emulate the resplendent displays of the parks and the Crystal Palace. Here are the scarlets and pinks, suggesting the glories of summer toilettes : then there are others of the variegated tints with

¹ The pseudo-jasmin.—ED.

flowers that are faintly odoriferous, and behind are the trained growths standing out waist-high like the standard roses against the green background of the laurels. As for azaleas and rhododendrons, like the lilies-of-the-valley they are melancholy failures, even when I bring peat to fertilise the sandy loam. It is the more tantalising that they run to riot in the approaches and in the pheasant coverts of the neighbouring domains.

And I must own to non-success as a bee-keeper, after investing in sundry patent hives—possibly because I have none of the enthusiasm of Lord Avebury, and care little for honey as being too luscious, though I have the Scotchman's love for sweets at breakfast. En revanche there are the wasps who make themselves a nuisance with the figs and the wall fruit, and the great bumble-bees whose droning here in a drowsy noon is a symphony that sets the music to the dancing of the butterflies. But the garden would be nothing without the birds, and if they make free with the fruit they richly repay you. How often I have caught my coat-buttons in the strawberry nets when crawling to relieve some frightened captive! How they get under the pegged-down coverings is a mystery, but there they are and they give you a world of trouble, for it is as hard for you to get in as for them to get out, and you do not grow the ripe strawberries

for external application. There are sundry pairs of turtle-doves that feed regularly with the tame pigeons, and one of them on the only warm day of the summer gave me full ten minutes of practice in the rôle of the sinuous serpent. These doves in an ordinary way are confiding birds ; they never seem to dream of anyone harming them. When the blue-rocks sweep down from the gable of the stable to gather with the fantails for their meals on the terrace, the doves are pecking quietly on the outer rank—in contrast to the sparrows who come to the front and to the starlings who, though they never join in these feasts, are even more cheeky than the sparrows. For they have appropriated the upper story of the pole dovecot, immediately under the windows, and though they interfere with the fantails' domestic arrangements I like their company so much that I never care to dispossess them. If the fantails, in consequence, make barren marriages, the starlings are amazingly prolific. They are always nesting and fetching materials, or coming home with worms dangling from their beaks. In fact the worms on the lawn must have a rough time of it, and it is a marvel that the breed is not extirpated. You look out of your bedroom of a dewy morn, with thrushes and blackbirds everywhere on the hop. There is a rush of a keen-eyed thrush, reminding you of Lord Dundreary in 'Our American Cousin'—there is an illustration of

anatomical leverage as the bird throws himself back—and away he flies with a quarter of a yard of worm, more or less, to indulge in a solitary gorge in the bushes. Those impudent sparrows too are useful in their way, and probably do as much good as mischief. But, as in the case of the starlings, I have a standing grievance with them, for they have effectually banished the house martins. The first year the house was occupied there were at least a score of swallows' nests under the eaves, and it was pretty to see them dropping across the windows as they fetched and carried for their broods. Now the migrants have almost given it up in despair, though there is a single attempt at nest-building season after season. The sparrows superintend till the work is well forward; then they serve a notice of ejectment, and I wish I could get a wrinkle as to how those lawless proceedings could be prevented. The garden is encircled with wire netting, but another irrepressible is the rabbit, though he comes as a single spy and not in battalions. There are never more than one or two, and once in the enclosure, if unmated, they must resign themselves to celibacy. But they keep themselves well in wind and give regular exercise to the terriers. Strange to say, they never harm the pinks or carnations; they lie out among the cabbages or in the grass of the orchard, but they are more destructive than the pigeons to the young peas.

and seedling carrots. The only time they show is at daybreak, and like ghosts they vanish from the lawn at cockcrow or thereabouts. If you chance to be up before the house is astir, you see them hopping about mistrustfully among the thrushes. There is the rattle of a shutter, the opening of a door, the dogs dash out in vociferous jubilation, and the rabbits are gone for the day.

In the jungle in the paddock where the hanging boughs of the oaks intermingle with dank elder and matted bramble, there is the soft murmur of a rill, bursting out of the bank like a landspring and slightly tainted with sewage. Birds of all kinds would take to that thicket anyhow, where they can breed and build in safety from the bird-nester, but the water and the dense shade are irresistible attractions. Thither a pair of nightingales come year after year, and once without trespassing unduly on their privacy, I had the luck to happen on their nest. In this ungenial year¹ they have been unwontedly silent, but on the rare occasions when the chill has been off the weather the male's vesper serenade made up for lost time. Then the frogs in the ditch, roused to emulation, chimed in, to take the bass in the concert. I rather like the croaking note of the Dutch nightingales, and you know besides that they are death on the obnoxious flies. As years go on and the skin turns to parchment, the gnats

¹ 1907.

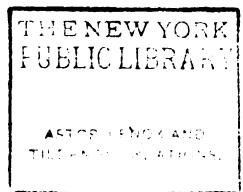
and midges cease to bother one, but the plague of flies on a sultry noon makes you sympathise with the Egyptians in their third infliction. The same persistent fly will keep you company on a five miles' tramp, invariably settling on the same identical spot. And they are eminently sociable when with a favourite book you have heaped rugs and cushions on the garden seat in the nook of a shrubbery on the lawn. Though then you have other and more agreeable distractions and you take a personal interest in the chases of the fly-catchers who nest in the creepers and ivy on the house. Those lively and restless little fellows, in perpetual motion, are the humming-birds of our northern latitudes. Always on the flight or the flutter, they will perch for a second or two on rail or twig, only to be off again before they have well settled. Their day is one continual fly-feast, where dance and dinner are interpolated with dessert on the saccharine coating below the leaves of the acacias. Though far from shy, the fly-catchers keep their distance, but if you often resort to that seat you strike up a friendship with the robin. If the robins had familiarised themselves with the moral of the 'Babes in the Wood,' they could not be more confiding. The very village urchins, for whom nothing is sacred, have a superstitious regard for the robin and the wren. My friendly robin signals his presence by a chirp, expecting the bread-crumbs I carry in my pocket.

Then he drops on the grass, head well on one side, and hops forward to within easy arm's reach. A hasty movement may send him into the rose-bushes, but even the dogs have no terrors for him, and when they are hunting in their dreams he will listen with interest. Naturally enough the wren was mated with the robin in the old nursery songs and in popular adage. She is the type of shrinking femininity, mignonne in person, modest in attire, and so timorous of man that if you put a finger in her nest she invariably deserts it. I know there are wrens about, for I see their nests, but it is seldom I catch a glimpse of the tiny shadows flitting through the bushes to skulk between the honeysuckles and the golden St. John's wort. The robin, on the contrary, is the bold outlaw of the merry greenwood ; free and independent as any citizen of the Wild West, and pugnacious as any blackcock. The chaffinch is almost as quarrelsome, but he keeps more to himself. The robin frequents the lawn, but you must look for the chaffinch in the orchard. Of all your birds he is perhaps the master builder, and the nest is in such picturesque harmony with the grey surroundings that though not actually hidden it is never easy to distinguish. There it is, with its covering of moss, in the fork of the mossy apple-tree, with its delicately spotted eggs on the soft lining of feathers and horsehair. The chaffinch builds leisurely, doing the interweaving



Alfred James Shand.

Age 73.



of the materials with infinite pains ; but his over-anxiety as to secrecy is apt to defeat itself, for the cry of alarm will guide you to the discovery. I wish the bullfinch were a more frequent visitor, though there is no denying that if you are fond of cherries and plums his room is more desirable than his company.. It is all very well to argue that he means well, and that he is in quest of insects when he is nipping off your fruit-buds, but the result is the same when hopes are blighted. Even more rare are the visits of the goldfinch, a wanderer who only turns up at long intervals. Like the gypsy he leads an unsophisticated life, and a wealth of weeds is what specially attracts him. One winter there was a rare growth of thistle and ragweed in the paddock, which, as usual, had been left absolutely untrimmed. And one morning a flight of goldfinches had settled down on it, to stay till they had made a clean sweep of the seeds. By the way, I had almost forgotten my water wagtails, as great friends as the robins, though they never permit similar familiarity. Year after year there is a pair of them ; they are always there, and there are never more. Except from Highland legend as to the years of the eagle, we have no authentic knowledge of the age of birds ; but I have often speculated as to whether these wagtails are the identical couple that, some thirty years ago, ‘hanselled’ the garden. Anyhow, their ways of living are

the same, and they are as much at home as I am. In age, according to the Highlanders, the owl comes next to the eagle and the salmon. Before the nightingale has hushed his song of an evening I often hear the hooting of the owls, and as I wend my way homeward in the dusk for a late dinner they often come flitting across my path hunting for field mice, and quartering the fields like a well-trained pointer. I love the sound of the wild shriek that marks their devious course, and no bird has been more misjudged by the poets, who should have had more sympathy with his moods. Gray, for example, sings ‘The moping owl doth to the moon complain.’ On the contrary, though the night cry sounds eerie in the gloaming he is a cheery fellow, as full of jest and mirth and frolic as Falstaff. But he sleeps through the day, and like many another good companion is at his best in the small hours. Like Shallow, he loves to hear the chimes at midnight, and like Sheridan he gets lively when the humour takes him, and now and again, when intoxicated with the night air, you should hear him laugh. I wish I saw more of another bird of the night, but though the nightjars, the fern owls, the goatsuckers—the victims of superstition, they have an infinity of aliases—abound on the charts above, they seldom visit my aviary. Coming down through the woods, when the shadows are falling, the fir-glades are resonant

with their jarring note, and they are flitting spectre-like across the path, industriously hawking the night moths and winged beetles. They say they are shy of man, and in the ordinary way they may be so. But once when I stood musing in the moonlight in a churchyard, like Gray, and meditating like Hervey among the village tombs, a pair almost fanned my cheek with their pinions, to settle on the boundary fence within a half-dozen yards of me. There they lay flat-breasted on the rail : I caught their eyes and I knew they saw me, but I tired before they did and scared them by walking off. Scott in his Journals tells a pitiful story of how in boyhood he wantonly threw a stone at a dog. He broke the poor animal's leg : it crawled up to lick his hand and he never forgot it. A similar atrocity perpetrated on the harmless nightjar lies heavy on my conscience and ever will. A girl had asked me to get her a nightjar's wing for her hat, and, in weak complaisance with a cruel fashion I detest, I consented. I see the scene of the tragedy now, in the bracken-bed on the skirts of a pheasant covert we were beating. I picked up the bird, with its wide mouth feebly gaping for its last faint breaths, and its eyes as beautiful and as reproachful as those of the dying roe, and I swore I would never again be guilty of such an enormity.

II. SCOTTISH GARDENS

'The country, they say, for a wounded spirit' was the unfortunate remark of Mr. Raddle on the evening of Mrs. Bardell's arrest. As it chanced, the ejaculation was ill-timed, but Mr. Raddle enunciated a great truth, and if he had specified the garden he would have been even nearer the mark. There is nothing like the garden for the solace of cares, for oblivion of troubles, and for the innocent exhilaration of the happy and light-hearted. My own earliest experiences of gardens were in the relatively ungenial climate of Northern Scotland, yet I have in my mind's eye more than one as beautiful and as much of an earthly Paradise as any I have seen elsewhere. Expatiating to Boswell on a proposed garden at Auchinleck, Johnson advised building walls for shelter and told him he might grow currants which 'make a pretty sweetmeat.' Bless the old moralist's soul, as to some shelter he was right, but with that you may grow anything in reason and in excellence. The first garden I am thinking of, where my youthful footsteps strayed among birds' nests and strawberry beds, had a kitchen department of a couple of acres, lying four-square like the New Jerusalem, enclosed with lofty walls lined with fruit trees, and backed up by belts of wood that broke the gales. Between it and the house was a wilderness of shrubbery, threaded

by broad gravel paths, all of them ending in the triangular flower garden, bounded on one side by thick copses and on the other by the murmuring burn. It fell in a succession of tiny cascades, between which the trout shot to their holes on the falling of your shadow. It issued from a sedgy thicket whence the water-hens could steal out to stalk across the grass. That garden was within easy reach of the house, and it was a delight before breakfast to rush out when everything was bespangled with dew, and gather the most fragrant of the flowers to bring back and lay beside your plate. Most accessible at the apex of the triangle was a bed of musk filling the air and straggling out beyond its boundaries to strike its roots beneath the turf. Behind was a bed of the hardy heaths which flourish in their white and purple in that latitude, beautiful though without scent. Beyond them you came to the heliotropes and other brilliant parterres, arranged in colour patterns. In spring, if you were indifferent to the breakfast-bell, which was seldom the case, you had only to make a rush for the gate of the kitchen garden. Never anywhere else have I seen such dense beds of lily-of-the-valley, each the size and shape of a Titan's coffin, as flanked that gate on either hand. A capricious plant it is, and will only take kindly to favourite soils. While the flower garden was rather laid out for colour and effect, the upper part of the kitchen garden

was given over to old-fashioned flowers, set in a maze of quaintly cut box-bordered beds. And from side wall to side wall, beneath the spread-eagled plum and cherry trees, stretched an unbroken border, six inches wide, of the gentianella as bright and of as deep an azure as any that bloom by the springs in the mountain pastures of the Alps. Another speciality was the clove carnations, of a blackish crimson, with a bouquet suggestive of the Spice Islands or a bottle of old Burgundy. And yet another was the polyanthus and dust-powdered auriculas, which thrrove exceedingly in a light gravelly soil and in the sea-breezes, and fringed the walks and alleys encircling the walls outside. I say nothing now of the stocks and wallflowers which we shall meet again in the cottage gardens. The walls on the outer and chilly side were covered with the Morella cherry, which does well in the shade and seems careless of sunshine. At the ripest there was some lack of sweetness, and as they made capital cherry brandy and were super-excellent preserved in spirits for dessert, even a boy was inclined to spare them. He could find metal more attractive in the good old Scottish gean trees, loaded with a fruit which is the concentrated essence of the finest cherry with an hyperborean flavour of its own. You might get up into a tree and gorge, but it only put an edge on the appetite. For the hardier fruits—goose-

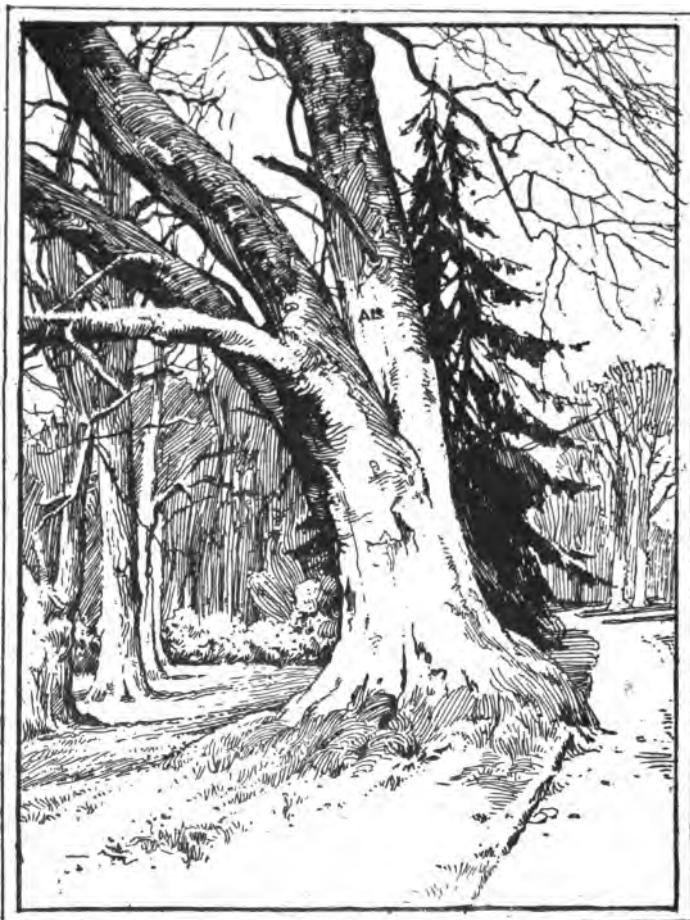
berries, strawberries, and raspberries—one may confidently back Scotland against the world. The raspberries grow wild in the woods, and very refreshing they are when you are tramping the covers. In that garden there were small prickly green gooseberries of unrivalled savour, and great golden globules as luscious as hothouse grapes. Of strawberries there was a succession, lasting from July to October. They came late, but, cultivated by experience, they came to stay. Once a year the garden was thrown open to the parish school to run riot among gooseberries and currants. What they carried off, knotted up in coloured handkerchiefs, was nothing to what they stowed away as a whet for a heavy tea. Between garden and stables was the old orchard, rather an eyesore and rock of offence to the head gardener, since out of regard for old memories it was left untouched. Most of the moss-grown apple and pear trees—oslins, crabs, and jargonelles—were almost past bearing, and it was a nursery for the birds that were the plague of the garden. Enclosed by wild hedges of holly and thorn, the snowberry and the barberry, loaded in autumn with their white and scarlet berries, never was such a place for the delight of the ornithologist. From the wren who made her bower in the roots of the hedge, from the chaffinch blending her nest with the grey of the lichens, up to blackbirds and thrushes, their numbers were legion. There

is one advantage in ample space and plenty that you need never grudge your feathered choristers their 'tithes.' Ground pillagers are another thing : no wire fencing will altogether shut out the rabbits, and with their delicate and fastidious palates they have an unfortunate taste for pinks and carnations. Yet as the fallow deer give life and animation to a park, I love to see a stray rabbit hopping out upon the turf pricking his ear as he listens for alarms, and then abandoning himself voluptuously to the forbidden feast. Nor can anything protect you from the raids of the squirrels on the wall-fruit ; but the gambols of those frolicsome little fellows are so graceful that I should as soon think of firing at a favourite terrier.

The secret of making a garden beautiful is to let art unobtrusively assist nature. But there are situations where you are absolutely dependent on nature to help you even to a beginning. There is no bleaker district in Scotland than Buchan, swept bare by the biting winds from the Pole. When a tree shows its head above cover, it is gripped and twisted and bent to the west. As a rule you might as well try to grow palms in the steppes of Siberia. But happily there are what are called Dens in these parts, deep little hollows over which the winds blow harmlessly and where the temperature is tolerably equable all the year round. They are the more enjoyable that they

are so many smiling oases in the waste ; as Jef-feries said of his keeper getting out of a sharp east wind into a sheltered wood, stepping down into one of them is like putting on a heavy great-coat. I know one in special where the central garden walk climbs the stiff brae between luxuriant fuchsia hedges ; and there are detached fuchsia bushes of great circumference and considerably higher than a man's head. Never matted, it is only after extraordinary winters that they have been cut down to sprout again. In one of two side dens is a garden of flowering grasses ; in another a fernery, with rockeries shrouded in the broad fronds, including even the rare and warmth-loving Osmagunda. Johnson when he went on his Hebridean tour declared that he had not seen a respectable tree between St. Andrews and Aberdeen. With all his prejudices, were he posting northwards now, he would be constrained to give a very different report. Lord Cockburn in his 'Circuit Journeys' speaks of the marvellous changes in his time, and the taste for horticulture has developed with the spread of the woods. The beech and the elm attain magnificent proportions, and flowers may be seen blooming round the most exposed farmsteadings, sheltered by the kindly bourtree bushes, and an outer screen of storm-beaten ashes. There are favoured spots in romantic situations in these parts, where the proprietor is his own gardener and has fondly

cherished each separate bed, so that you might fancy yourself in the Riviera. I recall the retreat of a crabbed old doctor, who tended it personally in the intervals of agonising gout. It was a tiny terrace, on a steep overhanging the Don, a mile or less above Byron's Brig of Balgowie.



*OLD BEECH TREE IN THE GARDEN AT STRALOCH,
on which Mr. Shand as a boy cut his initials.*

It was such a brilliant blaze of colour in summer as you see on a Haarlem tulip farm, and came on you as an enchanting surprise when you had been shivering under leaden skies and the sea-fret. But for colouring in these Northern latitudes you must go to the lochs and sea on the Western coast. A friend of mine, with an unfortunate passion for horticulture, half ruined himself by building a Palladian villa, and laying out such terraced gardens as court the sun at Posilipo or Sorrento. They were warmed by the Gulf Stream and watered by the soft rains of the Atlantic. They would have tempted Titian or Paul Veronese to leave sacred subjects and turn to flower-painting. I have never seen elsewhere such vivid tints on the gladiolus, and there was a shimmering transparency in the whites of the lilies and arums which reminded me of the fringes of the clouds in a watery sunset in Western Ireland. As there were grouse moors attached with first-rate snipe and plover shooting, he had never any difficulty in letting his Paradise at a fancy rent to wealthy strangers. Nor had the enthusiastic horticulturist made much of a change for the worse when he built himself a little lodge in his heathery wilderness. In soil that was literally peat, it was natural enough that in the course of a few years he should have grown superb rhododendrons and azaleas. In a hot summer afternoon the air was laden with the

fragrance of his flowers, and as for his cabbages, in the words of the Ettrick Shepherd in the 'Noctes,' they were big as balloons.

In Scotland as in England the gardens of the great mansions are much the same everywhere. In them, laid out and kept up regardless of cost, you are apt to feel as if you were got up in court dress, and must be careful of committing any breach of etiquette on paths where a fallen leaf was an eyesore. Scotch gardeners are famous all the world over, and in the grand gardens, allowing for temperature, Caledonia more than holds her own, from Dunrobin to Drummond Castle. What is more characteristic are the somewhat melancholy survivals of a troubled past, when the lady of some castle or lonely tower had few and limited pleasures. But the taste for flowers existed even then, though it was primitive and struggled with difficulties. When the nearest neighbours were probably your worst enemies, Scotland was dotted over with fortalices, and Aberdeenshire is specially rich in bastioned and turreted keeps, modelled on the feudal castles of Touraine. Round most of them, within the shattered foundations of the outer wall, you may still trace the garden, and if by chance the soil is turned up deep, the roots of some tenacious plants will revive again. Jesse in his 'Gleanings' tells of the same thing in Richmond Park where flowers that had seemed to have suspended

vitality for centuries began to bloom freshly as before when disinterred. Where the castle has been kept up, though falling from laird to farmer, the garden beautiful in decay is still in existence. In one of these I had many a happy morning which will always dwell in the memory. Two or three oak-panelled rooms, to which you ascended by the corkscrew staircase of foot-worn granite, had been reserved for the landlord's use. You were awakened for the day's shooting by the crowing of cocks and all the sounds of the farm-yard. You looked out of the narrow window, set deep in the wall, on the Castle fields in which Bruce had won his first decisive victory. And beneath the window was the strip of terraced garden which he had probably paced on the morning of the battle. It was so inviting that lingering over the toilette was waste of time. It was cared for, but slight attention was given to appearances. The broad border was a series of stocks and gillyflowers, where the bees from the sunny row of hives were busy. Beyond the broader gravel walk among the thickets of fruit bushes, sunflowers and hollyhocks were struggling to emerge. The moss-grown masonry that topped the deep-sunk fence was half lost in a tangled growth of nettles and dockens. On the southern front the ancient walls were hidden in a growth of ivy intermingled with Banksia roses. But most beautiful of all was the scarlet Rosa

Ampelopsis that from basement to roof-tree covered the corner tower. Beautiful it is, but strangely capricious; it is indifferent to cold and contemptuous of warmth, yet I have tried repeatedly but in vain to acclimatise it in the South.

The monks of the middle ages have always shown exquisite taste in the selection of sites for their abbeys and cloisters. Possibly it was the horror of Popish superstition which sent Presbyterians to the opposite extreme. Certain it is that their churches are for the most part in the most unlovely situations, and heritors, who kept a close grip on their shillings, spent nothing they could help on either kirk or manse. Still the minister would make the best of glebe and garden, and gardening was one of the rare pleasures in which the austerer Calvinism permitted him to indulge. In the garden the worthy man would meditate his homilies, and there he would often be up with the lark to toil in his shirtsleeves, like any labourer. The garden with its innocent intoxication or its sense of repose, faint foretaste, as it were, of the transports of Paradise, may have done as much for the spiritual welfare of his parishioners as the most soul-searching of his seven-headed discourses. The hermit of St. Ronald's was altogether an exception to his caste when 'the little garden, which might have given an air of comfort to the old house, was abandoned

to a desolation of which that of the slaggard was the type.' There Scott, with his aptitude for insinuating a moral, has shown how the failings of an excellent man may be fatal to his duties. Mr. Cargill was respected and beloved, but his parish had gone to seed like his garden. And in my experience the minister who neglected his garden was equally neglectful of his cure. But the minister's example has done little in Scotland to spread the gospel of gardening among the cottagers, and we must cross the border to see the cottage garden in its simple beauty.

III. COTTAGE GARDENS

A special beauty of rural England is the cottage garden. It excites the admiration of the Continental and the envy of the American. Forests have been disforested and chases unparked, but the cottage garden remains a genuine relic of the merry England of fancy and the ballads. It is seen in perfection when you come on some model village which has grown up under the shadow of the noble family or the large-acred and long-descended squire. The cottages may not invariably be sanitary according to modern notions, but they are always picturesque and generally comfortable. The tenants are happy for they know that in time of trouble they have only to address themselves to the Castle

or the Hall. It is understood that they are to keep their gardens beautiful ; they have only to apply to the gardener at the great house for seeds or roots, and every householder takes a pride in his flowers, which is stimulated by rivalry at the cottage flower-shows. Sometimes it may be carried to discreditable lengths, and I know a case where a man was caught out and sent to Coventry, for stealing earth from the churchyard to force his prize tulips. The men may occasionally go to the Hall for roots, but for the most part these gardens are just as they were under the Tudors and the Stewarts. For it is noteworthy that every English king took an interest in gardening from Henry VIII. to George III. You may see a sample of the old cottage garden where it ought to be found—at that familiar place of pilgrimage, Anne Hathaway's house at Shottery. The old-fashioned flowers seem just as they must have been when wild Will Shakespeare went a-wooing his elderly wife. You come on the bright cottage garden immediately on crossing the border. Those at Ford between Tweed and the Cheviots, facing Flodden Field, were built and embellished by Lady Waterford when she made her home there. They are a foretaste of the many dreams of beauty that await you from Tyne and Tees to the farthest South. But, in the way of digression, I am reminded of another Northumbrian garden of very different aspect.

Ford is screened by the hills and the broomy braes, but there is no sort of shelter at Alnmouth, where I passed part of two springs in a brick-built ramshackle mansion, beaten by the North Sea breezes and saturated by the North Sea frets. The grey outlook to Coquet Isle, where the cell of the good saint in ‘Marmion’ had been replaced by a glistering lighthouse, gave a rare zest to auriculas and sea-pinks and other sea-loving plants that glorified the terrace of shingle commanding the estuary of the Alne. Sitting in the sheltered arbour and breathing the fragrance of gorse and broom, you had an unholy satisfaction in watching screw steamers laden to the water-line, pitching and rolling on the heavy ground swell.

Perhaps those cottage gardens are at their best in the flush of the spring, when the crocus, the snowdrop, the violet, and the daffodil are out. The yellow daffodil, associated with rooks, rookeries, and—it must be added—with nipping March winds is a special friend of mine as it was of Shakespeare and Wordsworth. Who does not know Wordsworth’s

‘ Host of golden daffodils ;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze ’?

And Perdita in the ‘Winter’s Tale,’ in a still

more exquisite passage, links the daffodil with the violet.

'Daffodils,

That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty : violets, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath.'

In May these are followed by the golden ranunculus, and the cottages are hid in the bloom of lilac and laburnum and of the pink and white thorns : in June, 'the month of roses,' the narrow walks are littered with the fall of rose petals. Then in July there is another and a still more brilliant transition when we reconsider our opinions as to the supremacy of spring. All our sweet-smelling favourites are in full bloom, the pinks, the carnations, the sweet peas, and the perennial stocks and wallflowers. But there are others which are half plants of the woods and fields, transplanted originally perhaps for their value to the herbalist, which flourish in many of these cottage gardens. There is the foxglove which grows everywhere, shifting itself with the drift of the seeds from one location to another. And there is the blue monk's hood, often tall as a man's head, and the shy evening primrose that unfolds itself with the twilight. It is hard to say which of the English counties has the most enchanting garden scenes. There is many a delightfully secluded nook among the deep lanes of

Devon, and in bleak Cornwall, among the crumbling chimneys of long-abandoned mines, there is a glorious growth of roses and hydrangeas around cottages hidden in the hollows. In mid-Kent there is as romantic scenery as any on the Scottish border, where the little rill is murmuring under cover in the depths of the wooded ravine, and there you come on cottages basking upon sunny southern ledges with their tiny hanging gardens attractive as any in the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar. But on the whole I should give the palm to Hampshire, where the bulging thatch roofs dwarf the side walls and where the vine and fig-tree of Eastern climes interlace themselves with the clusters of clematis and roses.

Gardening, as I said, came into fashion under Henry VIII., and there is a wealth of quaint old literature on the subject. Gardens of grand formality were multiplied at Nonsuch, Theobalds, Hampton Court, Hatfield, and scores of other great country seats. Tastes have changed since then, though we have rather reverted to the ancient style, since the passing of 'Capability' Brown and his school of destructives. But as at the cottage, the formal Tudor garden is still to be seen by many a back-of-the-world Elizabethan manor house, where it has been jealously preserved as the pride of its possessors. It is the visible symbol of their standing in the

county and ancient descent. There are the pleached alleys, the tall hedges sculptured into quaint devices, and the grey stonework of the fountains and artificial cascades, with the vases and the weather-worn statues of a time when we were borrowing ideas from France and Italy. The sundial is invariably a conspicuous object, at a sunny crossing of the paths, with *Eheu fugaces*, or some such half-effaced inscription on the pedestal.

When travel was leisurely and ground rents were low, there was always ample space for the garden of the 'Chequers' or the 'Black Lion.' It supplied the inn with vegetables and the guests with nosegays. On pedestrian tours I have smoked many a pipe in the arbours of these flowery wildernesses. In the posting houses on the great roads these pleasaunces were always kept up with some care, so that travellers might be tempted to prolong their stay. You entered under the echoing archway, where the flints or cobbles had resisted the tread of many a generation of hackneys and post-horses. Beyond the stable-yard was the smooth bowling-green, shaded by the mulberries or medlars which came in handy for dessert, or the spreading branches of the sweet-scented walnut, invaluable for pickles. They were as much a speciality of the venerable establishment as the sign of the 'Crown' or the 'Mitre' swinging over the great horse-troughs.

For one at Sevenoaks I had a special affection, before Sevenoaks became suburban and a centre of villadom and jerrybuilding. Many a week-end I have passed there, before the week-end became a fashionable institution : the cook, by the way, was a cordon bleu, and from the untrained luxuriance of its leafy labyrinths it was a pleasant stroll to the beautifully kept gardens of Knole, with their courts in keeping with the inner courts of the grand old feudal mansion. The scent of the court of the lavender is in my nostrils at this moment.

There are enchanting gardens in Western England, watered by the Atlantic rains and rejoicing in an equable temperature. The average temperature at Polperro is higher than that of Naples. The Scilly Isles and the Channel Islands vie with the Riviera in the truckloads of lilies and crocuses, to say nothing of early fruits and asparagus forced under glass, which they send to Covent Garden. And on the mainland are hotels which know how to advertise themselves by horticulture. To two more especially I was attracted by the gardens, season after season ; they were such delightful spots for dreaming away a languid summer morning with your pipe before going in for violent exercise. One was the Imperial at Torquay, where from rockeries, ferneries, and shrubberies you looked to Brixham across historic water : the other was the Foley

Arms at Malvern, where from hanging gardens embellished with semi-tropical exotics you traced the windings of silvery Severn till the river lost itself in the distant heat haze. In Herefordshire gardens like that of Holme Lacy on the Wye is an exuberance of rich vegetation. I know gardens in Southern Hampshire and the Isle of Purbeck where the flower parterres break back into the dark pine glades, and it is but a step from the geraniums to the self-sown foxgloves. But Londoners need not envy the dwellers on Wye or Severn : they have their own Thames Valley within easy reach, and the view from Richmond Hill surpasses that from the Malverns. The Severn meanders through meadow and woodland : the Thames flows through flowers from suburban villadom to such retreats as Cliefden, Hedsor, and Dropmore, whose leafy avenues meet at Three Noblemen's Corner. Once I made one of a quartet who, bringing our own boat, had our headquarters through July at the 'Ship' of Halliford. It was one of the driest and hottest summers on record, and each day from noon to night we were on the water between Kingston and Old Windsor. When wearied of pulling we used to land and diverge. That July has left indelible impressions ; we might have been in the Land of Flowers which is the sighing burden of the Norse song in 'Sintram and his Companions.' Every garden that sloped to the river bank was

bordered with brilliant calceolarias and geraniums : the strip in front of the semi-detached cottage was as gorgeously coloured and as carefully tended as the pleasure-grounds of the wealthy banker or brewer at Thames Ditton or Walton. I specially recall the river paradise of Mr. Lindsay, the well-known shipowner and member for the shipping interests, where Mr. Gladstone used sometimes to be seen sauntering of a Sunday. But of all the fair gardens on Thames, give me that of Bisham. Like Hampton Court it had something of Dutch formality, well befitting the venerable grey walls of the abbey, and no drought could touch the luxuriance of its wealth of old-fashioned flowers. You loitered among them and paused to listen to the matins of the birds as you came back from the bracing header from the secluded bathing-house. Some folks object to that trim formality of the Dutch garden. For myself, at Hampton, I always recalled the memories of Wolsey and Dutch William, when of a Saturday or Sunday the vans and omnibuses had disgorged their cargoes of trippers from the courts and slums of London. The flower-beds laid out with mathematical precision, the colours assorted with the eye of a Rubens, the smooth green turf, the broad gravel walks, the stone basins and the murmuringplash of the fountains, had all a characteristic charm of their own, and like the Maze, where couples

keeping company would lose themselves, seemed strongly to take the popular fancy.

IV. ON THE CONTINENT

From Hampton it is a natural transition to Holland, and Holland is emphatically the country of the florist. The Dutchman's favourite pastimes are gardening and skating. Even Dirk Hatteraick, though by no means cast in a sentimental mould, talked of passing the peaceful evening of his days in a lust-haus on the Middelburg dyke with a blumen-garten like a burgomaster. The Hague, with its public gardens and parks, laid out with lavish profusion, is the brightest little capital in Europe. There are flowers everywhere : there are oranges and lemons in the hall of the Bellevue, there are flowering boxes on all the window-sills of the Paulez. The Dutchman's idea of perfect bliss is the arbour among the flowers, looking down on the emerald duckweed on the stagnant backwater, with a big china pipe in his mouth and a bottle of schiedam at his elbow. The trekshuyts and other craft on the canals, like the houseboats of Srinagar, are so many floating gardens. Soil and climate are congenial to bulbs ; the very name Haarlem suggests tulips and hyacinths. The business is less profitable than it used to be, but is still a flourishing trade. In April the blaze of

the tulips spreads over hundreds of acres ; and for miles the scent of the hyacinths hangs heavy in the hazy air. There was a time—Dumas has commemorated it in his ‘*Tulipe Noire*’—when the gamble in tulips was as wild and ruinous as that of the South Sea stock or shares in the Mississippi Bubble. Roots which came into the market then were recklessly bulled and beared. Speculation of the sort has been long extinct : sixty or seventy florins is now a fancy price for a bulb, but Haarlem still supplies all the gardens of Europe.

The German gardens do not rank high ; generally there is a want of finish about them, though some of the Electors and feudal potentates not unsuccessfully imitated Versailles with its superb waterworks, and at Schönbrunn the grand alley, with its tall, closely-clipped tree hedges, is a striking feature in a beautiful scene. But in the great days of the gaming-tables MM. Blanc and Benazet were wise in their generation. Their landscape gardeners made the most of the environs of the Kursaals, and tourists who looked in en passant were tempted to linger and lose their money. Smiling innocence charmed the innocent visitor who rubbed shoulders with all the rascality of Europe. Who does not remember the rustic bridge over the brook at Wiesbaden, where the carp crowded to a perpetual feast of bread-crumbs ? From the terraces of Homburg you

looked over the gay parterres and the health springs to the hills of the Taunus and the vineyards of the Main. The Kursaal at Baden-Baden was embosomed in its hanging woods, where all the artful paths were leading to Rome, for all tended back towards the frescoed salons. And from the salons the seductive clink of gold mingled with the droning of the bees who were hovering over the scented beds, provided for them gratis by the generous administration. There were gardens of a sort at the inns on the Rhine, where you breakfasted and supped al fresco, looking down upon Byron's exulting and abounding river. There were gardens at hotels like the Bellevue of Dresden, where, in the picturesque Highlands beyond the Elbe, the eye wandered in the recesses of the Saxon Switzerland. But Germany is a country of fruits rather than flowers. Each secluded and insanitary hill village is intermingled and environed with orchards. On the Rhine, the Elbe, and the Mosel, the vines climb each castled height and struggle successfully for a living on each scrap of cultivable soil. In France the high roads are bordered by poplars; but in the Rheinthal from Bonn to Coblenz, at the Königstuhl and in the Rheingau in the spring, you are continually walking under the shade of the cherry and apple blossoms. The Rhenish farmer resents any trampling of his meadow-land, as the angler knows to his cost; but for a

groschen or two you might have your fill of his superabundant cherries and plums.

In Switzerland the glory of the summer flowers is in piquant contrast against the snows and the glaciers. I often recall the striking stage effect of the semi-insular Château Rougemont at Thun, as the steamer was heading up the lake, bound for the frozen heart of the Oberland. Another pleasant memory is the garden of the Baur-au-Lac, on the margin of 'Zurich's sweet water.' But Rousseau was right when he wrote that 'mon lac est le premier.' North of the Alps there is nothing approaching Lake Leman in a genial spring or the warm summer—it is a somewhat more pallid and none the less enjoyable reflection of the semi-tropical Como. It has drawn other sentimentalists than Jean-Jacques Rousseau—for Byron and Shelley it was an irresistible magnet. Everywhere along the shores are coquettish villas, in brilliant parterres, associated with many a famous name—from the Coppet of Mme. de Staël, with Byron's monarch of mountains towering in the distance, to Ouchy and Vevey, Clarens and Montreux. At Ouchy and Lausanne was a society of hospitable English folk, before some of the best were scared away by the short-sighted cantonal taxation. They had imported their English tastes and Scottish gardeners. The very names of their homes were suggestive—Bellerive, Beaurivage, Mon Repos.

Old Mr. Haldimand's grounds—he figures in the biography of Dickens—were a dream of beauty ; and those of M. de Cerjat, another friend of the novelist, were scarcely less attractive. There was no more delightful place of sojourn in Southern Europe than the Trois Couronnes at Vevey, before the desecrators ran an esplanade between the house and the lake. Then the parapet of the garden terrace rose sheer out of the water, and boats with their bright awnings were always moored off the marble steps leading down to the lake. It was pleasant to be rowed or to row yourself, according to your mood, to Chillon, or to St. Gingolph on the southern shore, with the grand encircling panorama of snowy mountains, topped by the conical Pain de Sucre. But in more listless vein one could dream away the afternoon on the terrace, among flowers harmonising with the crimson sun-blinds, soothed by the soft sounds of a piano, perhaps touched by some master-hand. And when you strolled beyond the odiferous precincts of the long street, to climb the hill to the church where Ludlow the Regicide lies buried, or to the adjacent tobacco factory where they sold harmless home-made cigars at ten francs the box, the air was loaded with the scents of the warm walnut leaves.

Before tunnels had been driven under the sublimest of the scenery, you came down from the

snow galleries and savage gorges of the Alps on the smiling Italian lakes. You inhaled the balmy Italian air, and the very softening of the names to Bellinzona, Baveno, Bellagio was suggestive. There was no more delightful halting-place than Baveno on Maggiore. Floating before you in the morning sunshine was the Isola Bella with its terraces rising tier above tier of thick foliage, which, whatever hyperæsthetic critics may say, was a masterpiece. It was a garden solitude, for you seldom set eyes on a gardener. There were bosquets of almond and orange trees, and mazes of scented shrubbery. You could seek the shade at midday under umbrageous flowering trees, with an English verdure of emerald turf. There was the murmur of rippling waters, the droning of the bees, the fluttering of the gorgeous butterflies, and the soothing of circling rings of cigar smoke in the stirless air. And you looked out down the leafy vistas to the cascades tumbling through rugged rifts, and you revelled in the contrasts. But all Lombardy is a richly cultivated garden, with its wheat, its trellised vines, its olive yards, and its mulberries, a land of silk and wine and oil, which in every age has tempted the marauder. Its sensual charms culminate towards the southern end of Como in the atmosphere of a conservatory, and in the enervating and voluptuous airs of Bellagio.

There iron gates locked the pedestrian in among the flower-beds, and the associations were mostly of moonlight serenades on the water. At Florence, on the contrary, you were tempted to suburban excursions, and Milton's Vallombrosa was a word to conjure with. As its name implies, the city is a shrine of Flora. The munificence of the first Cosmo of the Medici bequeathed it the Boboli Gardens, whence you look down from the labyrinth of shaded walks on the countless domes and spires of what was formerly a smokeless city. Before the vandals of a United Italy descended on Florence and Rome, the Boboli were the central gem of an harmonious setting. They were surrounded by a circlet of Palladian villas with terraced gardens, gleaming white balustrades and al fresco galleries of statuary showing well from a distance. But there as at Rome the wrecker has gone to work and one can only make a moan over vanishing glories. As for Rome, from the days of the Republic and the Empire downwards, it has always been famous for suburban retreats. The environs of Horace's Tibur are attractive as ever, but for the modern villas with their magnificent gardens Rome is chiefly indebted to popes and cardinals. Even now the wide intra-mural spaces are enclosed by lichen-covered walls draped in hart's-tongue and maidenhair. But the tempter was abroad, and the clerical and

conservative owner of the Ludovisi sold his beautiful heritage to the speculative builder. The cypress avenues were levelled and the stately palms grubbed up and transported. But there is still the Borghese beyond the Pincian Gate, the fashionable promenade of Sunday afternoons, and many another, the choicest of them on one of the crests of the Seven Hills, commanding magnificent views. The gardens I loved the best were those of the Doria Pamphili beyond the Porta St. Pancrazzio, where you might have been musing in the solitudes of the Sudan instead of on the outskirts of a crowded capital. There are glorious views of the Sabine Hills, and the grounds, though the French besiegers had made wild work there, had been restored and were kept up regardless of expense. In the invigorating spring air it was hard to believe that in summer the malaria made that Eden uninhabitable, and that the family had notice to quit when their gardens were most enchanting. But the malaria or the stifling heat have always driven the Roman aristocracy to the mountains in the summer. Consequently all the eastern hills are gemmed with palatial mansions. All of them command superb views, but the Aldobrandini of Frascati almost surpasses the Torlonia of Castel Gandolfo in its magnificent prospects over the Campagna to the Pontine marshes in the distance. Nor can

I forget the Villa d'Este at Tivoli, associated with many a merry picnic, with its dark cypress walks and its gloomy ilex groves, shading grottoes and fountains and groups of the nymphs and satyrs which may have inspired Hawthorne in his inimitable 'Transformation.'

On the gardens of Campania and Sicily I could only ring the changes with slight variations. The climate softens, and the mild breezes of the Tyrrhene Sea, that once nursed the roses of plague-stricken Pæstum, still warm flowers and rare exotic shrubs into the richest exuberance and a marvellous vividness of colouring. Volcanic hills are covered with mantles of verdure: for the Campagna with its shattered aqueducts and ruined towns in the middle distance you have azure seas with the white sails of fishing boats, and the fruitful islands of Ischia and Capri. One can well understand the luxurious aristocracy of Imperial Rome lavishing princely fortunes at Baiæ or Posilipo. Though the serenity may sometimes be rudely disturbed, there is something approaching eternal summer there. But the winter guest must take care in selecting a situation. Charmed by summer recollections of orange bowers in the garden of the Hôtel Tasso at Sorrento, I was once misguided enough to take an apartment in the Villa Falcone. Nothing could be more picturesque: from the verandahs

we looked down the face of a precipice into an orange garden in the depths of a ravine. But we were on the wrong side of the hill, in a house without fireplaces built for the summer heat, and I shall never forget the sufferings of that watery winter.



CHAPTER II

THE TRAMP IN SUMMER

SOUTHERN England is the paradise of the sturdy tramp. As a rule he comes in with the cuckoo ; in the merry months of midsummer he is in his glory, and like the hedgehog and the squirrel he goes into winter quarters—in one of his Majesty's gaols or elsewhere. Experience teaches him that spells of enforced restraint send him back to his irregularities with renewed zest. As one of the guild remarked to Dickens in a confidential talk, the hours and the diet, ‘ which is regular, mind ye, freshens a cove up a bit and does him good.’ In the spring time the good of a fair land is before him, and the spirit of improvident adventure is strong as the sap in the trees. The nature for which he has no great sentimental affection offers him the key of the woods and the fields, with the run of the field barns and outlying cattle-sheds as alternatives in a climate the reverse of stable. The tramp we have often been inclined to envy is a genuine English type. In Holland there are no hills and in Belgium there is no elbow-room. Fancy making a pilgrimage of professional pleasure over the dusty roads of Northern France, be-

tween the grim double hedges of poplars : across the arid plains of the Castiles, or through the forests and marshes of limitless Russia. In Southern Europe local mendicity defies all alien competition. Germany, with its streams and woodlands, would be an inviting country enough, and the peasants are kindly and hospitable. But in Germany, beyond any other country, the authorities are inquisitive about papers and vouchers of respectability. The only licensed beggars there were the Handelsbürschen, and even they under the Empire are dying out. Even in England, as we remark regretfully, the profession is not what it was. The constabulary give trouble and are apt to run a cove in for sleeping out with no coppers in his pocket. But the tramp who is worth his salt is as careless of the constabulary and their traps as Cooper's Hawkeye of the Mingoes with their diabolical wiles. Like the scout of the pre-republican wars in America, he ought to be up to every dodge of the enemy, for the tramp, like the poet, nascitur non fit. He should be sound in wind and limb, shrewd of brain, light of spirits, and of the happy-go-lucky temperament that takes no thought for the morrow. He should have that enviable vacuity of mind which carries him cheerily along a somewhat monotonous round without any sense of boredom. In camping for the night, his instincts lead him to the most picturesque

situations, though probably for practical reasons. He may not look with the artist's eye on the yellow-green foliage of the spreading oak, but it is as effective against the heavy passing shower as the best bell-tent from Edgington's. The dense undergrowth of bramble and dog-rose screens himself and his fire from the wind that has got up and is blowing from the cold quarter. He has his favourite resorts in his rounds, and you may know when he is at home by the thin column of smoke curling high above the tree-tops. He generally camps near water, though not for purposes of ablution, but the kettle must be filled, and he has his own ways of regarding surrounding objects. The noisy nightingales that disturb his settling to sleep are suggestive of twigs and birdlime ; and the thrushes and linnets that serenade him when he wakes at early dawn are so many shillings or half-crowns hopping over the turf and among the branches. But business must be attended to, so he makes his toilette with a shake of his rags and sets forth hopefully on his daily peregrination.

Tempted by his example, I have tried tramping in amateur fashion myself, but with unsatisfactory results. There was the inevitable drawback of money in your purse, and in populous England the trouble of fighting the seductions of some snug little inn within easy reach. As your bread was certain and your beer was sure, you

missed the saving elements of doubt and excitement. In the wilds of Scotland you were somewhat better off. I have slept under the Shelter Stone in Mar Forest among Campbell's 'high Cairngorms.' When after deer in the Outer Hebrides I have harboured in a low-browed cavern with the sombre insinuations of a smuggler's den and a Keltic burial vault, and I have lain out in a plaid on the hill in the heather. The sounds of the night and the sense of loneliness are eerie enough—the moan of the Atlantic surf on the shore, the wail of the plover or the bark of the dog fox. But the portmanteau at some adjacent base of operations bothered you, and though you might be woke up by the scream of the eagle instead of the crow of the cock, from dreams that had an uncanny resemblance to nightmares, you had a discouraging sense that it was not the real thing. As a boy I always envied Borrow, a born vagabond, if ever there was one, when he chaffered for the tinker's cart and little horse, and started wandering tinker on his own account. He shed the slough of civilisation and culture like one of his friend Jasper Petulengro's snakes ; changed his spots as the leopard can never do, and clothed himself in a new individuality. I did not envy him his rounds with the Flaming Tinman, though he did come off victorious, but there was an ineffable charm in the peaceful life in the dingle and in his

affectionate relations with the little horse, the sole companion of his solitude, who sympathised silently with his master when sickness struck him down.

The Flaming Tinman naturally resented intrusion on his beat. But tramps in general are not a quarrelsome race, and would be inclined to good fellowship like London beggars, did circumstances admit of it. I have seen them fraternising on the tavern bench beneath the swinging sign, and falling affectionately on one another's necks or into the watering trough towards the small hours, when business had been good and the liquor had flowed freely. But, for professional reasons, they must do their wanderings alone, or at most hunt in couples, like the primitive Christians. In their appeals to charity many of these tramps might take high rank as self-taught actors, but it is difficult for the second man to play up to his comrade. There is admirable versatility in the way in which the stalwart pedestrian crumples up at the sight of an eligible object, carrying the crushing weight of care on his drooping shoulders. And he is as facile of change as any music hall artist when you stumble upon him as you come sharp round a corner, to find him humming a festive stave or breathing a monody of curses as the case may be. You see him go stumping and limping round to the back premises, affectionately cajoling the dogs who

are viciously snarling at his tattered trousers, with a sinister gleam in his sharp grey eyes. You overhear him making such piteous appeals to the maidens, and telling such piteous tales of sickness, sorrow, and domestic bereavement that they are ready to ransack the larder for the poor man's consolation. The hardest heart ought to be touched, when you turn up just in time to save your chickens or the sirloin, and to catch the scowl that flits over his face, fleeting as a summer shadow. If you have leisure for a retort and care to make it, you have only to listen patiently for a few minutes, express warm sympathy and hand him half a loaf. The disgust, whether smothered or expressed, will repay you, when the bread will be tossed in your face or chucked over the nearest hedge.



CHAPTER III

SCOTTISH GAMES

I. GOLF

IT may sound surprising that I learned golf in France, though I had looked at it for some five-and-twenty years in Scotland. And the golfer if not born should be caught young, consequently I was never much of a performer. The truth was that in my earliest days, to the north of the Tay, though there were frequented links at Aberdeen and Carnoustie, the game was followed by comparatively few and played in somewhat desultory fashion. Nevertheless, afterwards, when I had made a home in Edinburgh, I saw a good deal of play and players as an outsider. To the south of the Tay it was emphatically the national game, with its enthusiastic devotees among all classes. It suited the climate, for it could be played in all weathers. In winter the fox-hunters might be frozen out for weeks, or the curling stopped by a tantalising thaw. Then one and the other rallied from the disappointment, and betook themselves to the links. In the most depressing downpour I have seen those whom the French call *pères de famille* taking their pleasure

manfully and going the rounds, shod with goloshes and under an umbrella. Golf numbered its enthusiasts in all classes. The golden fashionable members of the Caledonian Hunt were no keener than the bare-footed hanger-on of the official caddie, who practised with a crooked stick and a ball he had found or stolen. The 'Royal and Ancient' had a rather select confraternity. If memory does not play me false, I became a member in later years, and subsequently, when I paid a visit to the North, saw my name still on a club box in golden letters. Those leading golf clubs and the golf houses at the greater resorts gave occasion for a deal of sociability and conviviality. Every performer of any notoriety could be fairly well handicapped by common report and the veriest muff or 'foozler,' who envied his skill. On the eve of a meeting there were dinners at the New Club in Edinburgh and elsewhere, where the programme was discussed and matches made up. The dinners were good and the wines unimpeachable, for the cellars in Leith and Edinburgh were famous, and there were no more erudite connoisseurs than the Scottish gentry. When the cloth was drawn, notebooks were brought forth and bets were flying freely about. I think the two most formidable amateurs of my time were Robbie Hay, afterwards Sir Robert, of Hayston, long and lithe as Laurence Lockhart described him in a golf-

poem published in ‘Blackwood,’ and Godard, a Leith merchant, of more sturdy build. There was little to choose between their play, and theirs was pretty much a drawn game. They were typical of two schools. Godard, if he did not regularly train, was in the habit of taking some care of himself by way of preparation. Hay took things as they chanced to turn up, leaving the results to Providence. One night at an hotel dinner at the Café Royal the odds ran strong in favour of the Leith man : there was to be a New Club ball on the eve of the match, and Hay ‘declared’ to take his dancing and champagne as in ordinary and the early train for St. Andrews next day. It was a close match, but the knowing ones were planted and he came in the winner by a short neck. Of course in making the bets, the character of the course was considered, and St. Andrews with its long drives had an advantage for a man with a reach and powerful swing.

St. Andrews, the chief seat of golfing and mediæval learning, is associated in memory with hilarious dinners and delightful county balls. Men used to club to take lodgings and hospitably entertain. More than once I was the guest there of a select party consisting of John Fletcher of Saltoun, Moncrieff Skene, then of Pitlour, and the cheery Bob Cathcart, all now gone. The countryside poured in and the old archiepiscopal

city was overflowing. But St. Andrews's links had their literary associations as well, when John Blackwood kept open house at Strathyrum. Strathyrum was known as the Golfer's Paradise. The host was himself a most zealous golfer, with great coolness and judgment, though never in the first flight, and he gave the links all the time he could spare from his books. Among the habitués of the house were Whyte Melville, father of the novelist. By the way, Lord Eglinton, of the Tournament, the magnificent Irish vice-king, died suddenly at Mount Melville, whither he had come for a golf meeting. Sir Alexander Kinloch and Boothby and Bethune, known familiarly as the 'Twa Meejors,' were at ease there. Skelton, the 'Shirley' of 'Fraser,' was a frequent visitor, and was known familiarly to his intimates as 'the Gercock'; Laurence Lockhart was always much at home with his editor, in fact his Fidus Achates, and Principal Tulloch with majestic figure and genial manner used to relax from the pulpit with the clubs. Blackwood had a favourite caddie, Bob Kirk, confidential and loquacious, though, like Scott's Tom Purdie, never taking a liberty, and for Kirk he had a great liking. But there was no one for whom he had greater regard than Tom Morris, who, as he used to say, was the gentleman in all circumstances. In support whereof he told a characteristic story in one of his letters. An old naval man bet

Thomas 50*l.* to a shilling that he did not make an almost impossible put, of which this Thomas though doubting had not despaired. Tom made the put and the Captain tendered the money. ‘Na, na,’ said Tom, ‘we were but jokin’ and I canna tak’ it’; and no more he did, though his fixed income was less than a pound a week. The old-fashioned wooden putter has been almost superseded by iron, in which there are innumerable ingenious inventions, but Tom in his time was famous for his putters of timber—thin and narrow-headed—and the industry survived and flourished again, when ladies’ golf clubs came into favour. But each of the rival links forty years ago had its far-renowned professional and club-maker—the Straths and the Parks, &c.—who, like Harry Smith of the Wynd, could well wield the weapons they forged and make money by them twice over.

Scotchmen took the national game very seriously, but they were bred to its chances and constitutionally self-contained and self-controlled. It was generally an imported novice who smashed his clubs and cursed his caddie in a violent outburst of temper. With Englishmen who have taken to golf in later life, with baffled aspirations and the rivalry for cups and championships, there is more ill-temper, and much more swearing at large. I know a clergyman, irreproachable in daily life and fervently im-

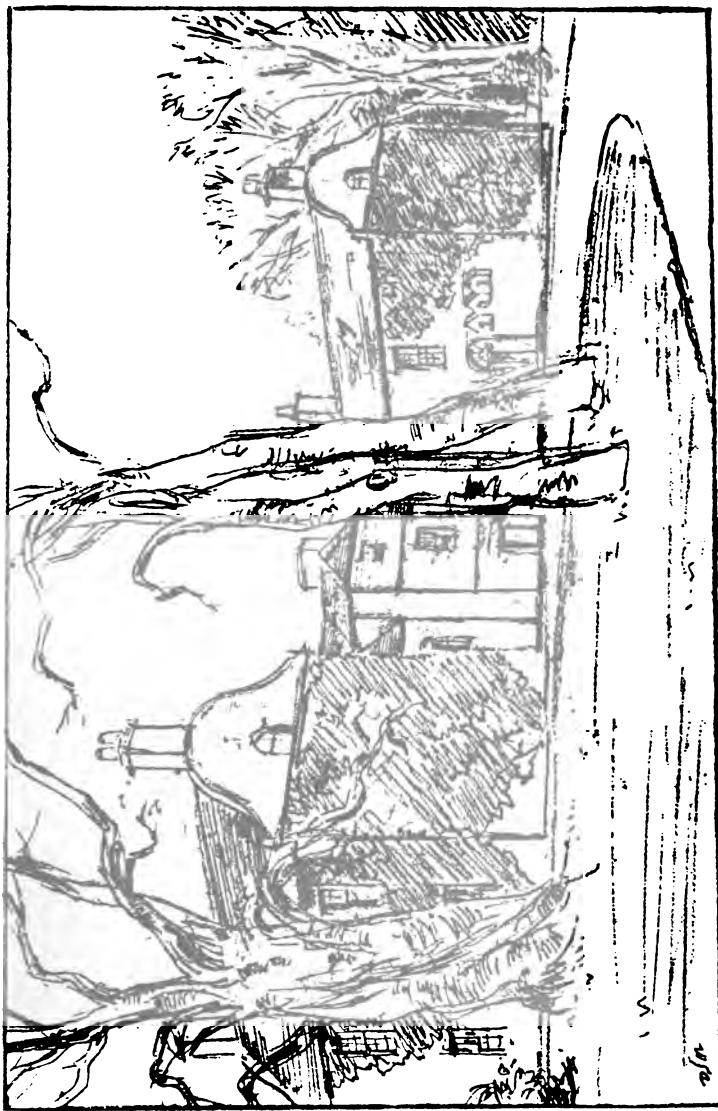
pressive in the pulpit, who goes round the holes when off his play, as he generally is, muttering execrations under his breath. I have seen an M.P., an eminent philanthropist, take the wind out of an unlucky dog in the wildest of drives, then objurgate the unoffending animal, which nearly led to a personal fray with the golfer who owned it. But perhaps the queerest case I can recall was on a medal day at Ryde, when one of the finest of English players had started with a friend, a nephew of mine, walking with him merely as spectator. He muffed the first hole, and his companion made some laughing remark. 'My dear Ned,' was the solemn rejoinder, 'we'll do this round, if you don't mind, in perfect silence.' When he broke down again at the second hole, there was an explosion, and the thunder roared and growled and muttered for all the rest of the round. He regained his serenity after dinner and then had the grace to apologise.

The East Neuk of the ancient kingdom of Fyfe was a far cry from Princes Street, and the multitude of Edinburgh golfers relaxed on Musselburgh Links. Most regular among these I specially remember Everard and Gilbert Mitchell Innes. Often were they to be seen lunching at the New Club, in joyful expectation of a lively afternoon. Both were idle men and could follow the bent of their fancies. But the bulk of the players were men of business, and in a severely

professional city golf was a strictly professional recreation. Musselburgh was always pretty full of a fine afternoon, and on Saturdays it was over-crowded. The only day when it was safe to take a meditative stroll, without the fear of being shrieked out of your senses or cut over by a ball, was the Sabbath, when excommunication would have visited the license in which the Southrons now indulge so freely. On a Saturday advocates in great practice stole a holiday, and I have seen a Lord Justice Clerk going the rounds, with a divine whose pulpit oratory drew admiring crowds, and who was serenely assured of the morrow's sermon. Even his Christian patience must have been sorely exercised when some 'foozler' with the lead had 'taken the line.' Ordinary day or Saturday, there was always a merry meeting at Mrs. Forman's hospitable 'public' hard by the south-western hole. Grilled haddocks, chops, and poached eggs were the staples of the simple menu, but there was often as much wit and wisdom at these mixed meals as at the symposia of the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*. Dulce est desipere in loco, but still there were conventionalities at Musselburgh which it was scandalous form to outrage. I became an object of remark, not to say reprobation, when I used to divest myself of my coat in the heat of the dog days. The caddie I always engaged was heartily ashamed of me, and only to be con-

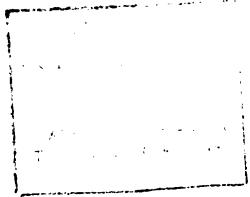
ciliated by liberal pay. Asked as to my identity, he answered contemptuously that I was 'Yeen Shand,' and he fancied I came from somewhere far awa' in the South. He was a long-legged ragamuffin, with good knowledge of the game, a conversable man, full of anecdote, and he came by subsequent promotion. In fact I have had the satisfaction of giving a back at leapfrog to two deserving men. When I passed at the Scottish Bar, a tall and dignified gentleman volunteered as my clerk. It is to be presumed he was temporarily out of luck ; at any rate, during the year I walked in Parliament House his commission was reckoned in shillings. But when I threw up the sponge, he passed straight into the employment of the Lord Advocate Moncrieff, and when that eminent lawyer and politician was raised to the Bench and the peerage, I think he was rewarded with a lucrative berth. But that is a digression for which I should apologise. Musselburgh links had their semi-classical associations. Jupiter Carlyle, an accomplished golfer in his time, was minister of the adjacent parish of Inveresk. In his cheery Reminiscences he tells of an outing from London to lunch with Garrick at the actor's villa at Hampton. Home, the author of 'Douglas,' accompanied him. Garrick asked them to bring their golf clubs, for it appears that golf was played then by Scotch immigrants on Moulsey Hurst. The doctor as-

tounded his host by teeing a ball before the summer-house where they were drinking and driving it into the river through an archway burrowing below the high road. One of the convives on that occasion was a Rev. Mr. Black, who had been presented to the rectory of Hampton by the Duke of Cumberland, and thereby hangs another Edinburgh reminiscence. Black had been chaplain to a regiment during the Rebellion of the '45, and had inoculated the stern Commander-in-Chief with the passion of golf. After the first game, the pupil invariably beat his astute master, who got the snug living on the Thames. So far as I remember, no golf was played at Leith in my time, but tradition associates the Leith links with another Royal prince of as sanguinary memory. The favourite amusements of James, Duke of York, were seeing Covenanters tortured in the Council Chamber and playing golf at Leith. And tradition says that his instructor and habitual antagonist was a caddie, who had driven a golf ball from the causeway of the High Street over the steeple of St. Giles. Bruntsfield Links—for the name of links had lingered—were still patronised by baillies and corpulent burgesses, who sharpened themselves for festive suppers in the evening by creeping about in coats of faded scarlet. Scarlet had gone out of fashion with the gentry, though it was still the wear at Carnoustie, and with another sprinkling of jovial



Shobdon, Herefordshire

21a



civic dignitaries behind the Broadhill at Aberdeen.

Bruntsfield was civic and Musselburgh suburban, but for week-ends—the word was not coined then—and for somewhat longer outings there was North Berwick. Nothing could be more breezily bracing than the sea-beaten slopes with the Law and the solan-haunted Bass and Tantallon in the background. How different then the peaceful townlet, with its single respectable hotel and scarcity of decent lodgings, from what it is now, when premiers set the fashion on the rounds and plutocrats entertain in luxurious villas! Speaking as a duffer, it always seemed to me that North Berwick was overrated. I remember one cramped corner in especial, where a lofty wall offered a trap which skill could scarcely avoid when an easterly wind was blowing capriciously. On the other hand, I delighted in the wild freedom of Gullane, whither I used often to be driven by my friend Hastings Anderson of St. Germains—a stretch of high rolling down, interspersed with furze clumps, where racehorses used to take their gallops. There was a river in Macedon and a river in Monmouth, and the hill at Gullane is not unlike the steep of Sandwich.

As I said, I was entered to golf at Pau, the first place, I fancy, where it was acclimatised on the Continent. And it had caught on wonderfully there with men who were elderly and whose

time hung on their hands. Even with the young and vigorous the steps invariably tended to the Plain of Billières, when the foxhounds were not out, or when no picnic was going forward. Take it all in all, it was ideal golfing ground, before it was cut up by the railway. The game was introduced there by Major Hutchinson, uncle of the more famous Horace. No one took to it more kindly than the Americans of the North, who with their irrepressible and inexhaustible hospitality were the salt and savour of the cosmopolitan foreign colony. Post, the father of the future American consul at Pau, and his inseparable ally Van Zandt were daily punctual as clockwork. The native French did not much favour the game, but there was one notable exception ; a poor Gascon gentleman who could not afford to engage a gamin, but was out in all weathers with driver and putter. Unfortunately, with all his praiseworthy efforts he progressed backwards. And that was the case with some of the most enthusiastic Englishmen ; in fact, among our scratch lot there was little talent and no genius. Among the best were R. B. Mansfield, who pulled stroke, and wrote 'The Log of the Water Lily on the Danube' ; and George Hughes, a tall athlete with a powerful reach who helped his brother Thomas in the biography of Tom Brown. It was Mansfield, an old Winchester man, with his friend Augustus Vansittart,

who afterwards set golf agoing on the Winchester downs. With Vansittart I subsequently played many a game at Blackheath, the seat of the oldest club in England. If you were living then in London, it was Hobson's choice—you must either play there or nowhere, for the holes on Moulsey Hurst must have been filled since Garrick's time, and if golfing had begun at Wimbledon I never heard of it. If we could only have had Blackheath as in the days of the highwaymen, but things had sadly changed! The hazards were cross roads, deep cut and roughly macadamised, tradesmen's carts, perambulators and nursemaids. It was no place for a poor man to play, when a casualty might involve him in tremendous consequences. I never committed myself further than by sending a ball into a policeman's face, and as he was used to being knocked about, five shillings settled the matter. But my friend was more unfortunate. He came to signal grief over a damaged old lady, who not only insisted on being carried straight to the London Hospital, but lived on his charity for many weeks, and never forgot him till her lamented decease.

II. CURLING

'Merry England' may have been a misnomer, as Dickens once sought to demonstrate in an article in 'Household Words.' But no one

ever dreamed of applying the epithet to barren Scotland, and Mr. Graham has painted in his exhaustive volumes the gloomiest picture of Scottish social life. Certainly the people took their lives very seriously and seldom indulged in out-of-door recreation ; for the practice of golf was local and confined to the lairds and respectable burghers. But there was one game which was even encouraged by the Kirk, and flourished especially in the South-Western Covenanting shires. The staunchest Calvinistic Cameronians were the keenest of curlers, and would almost as soon have missed a field preaching as the bonspiel. Oddly enough, although the climate gets harsher as you go north, till latterly curling was little in favour ayont the Tay. Perhaps because the Highlanders were robbing or starving or doing both, and kept their more peaceable low-country neighbours on the alert. But from Tay to Tweed, and from the Bass to Ailsa—which then as now supplied the best quality of curling stone—every able-bodied Scot was keen on the curling. You say the Scotchman is unimpressionable and seldom endowed with the sense of humour. We grant that his self-command is great : that on the whole he prefers business to pleasure, and that he does not unbend so lightly as the Southron. But the stillest waters run the deepest and the pent-up forces are ‘prodigious.’ For Dominie Sampson being a Galloway man must have curled,

though Scott has forgotten to say so. There is a hard black frost, one bright winter morning ; the fields are fast bound in fetters of iron ; but for once the labourer out of work thinks scorn of the lost bawbees. All the unemployed neighbourhood is alive and making universal holiday. Sounds are transmitted to extraordinary distances, from the rush of the train to the whistle of the curlew. The uninitiated stranger taking his walk abroad in the moorlands hears something like the faint murmur of many waters. As he approaches it resolves itself into a babel of tongues, and the jubilant roar of stentorian voices. At length from a height he looks down on the sheltered hollow, where the sheet of dark glassy ice is environed by snowy hills. Clear spaces are kept here and there, but the frozen lakelet is crowded. If he asks in his ignorance, he is told that the great match is on between the parishes of Kilstarvit and Dreepdaly. For the curling is a burning question of provincial and parochial patriotism, and there is always a great gathering to wait upon the momentous issues. You say the dour Scot is seldom excited. Why, here the very ministers of the Gospel are turned maniacs, and grave elders of the Session with their lyart locks are skipping about like kids on the mountains of Gilboa. The dull roar of the gliding stones is half drowned in the cries of ‘Soop her up’ : ‘Soop her up’ : ‘Letabee’ :

'Let abee'; and brooms cut from the braeside are flourished wildly in the air by decent folk who have divested themselves of each shred of dignity. The deputy sheriff rubs shoulders with the notorious poacher: the laird and the loon meet in social equality—or rather the loon and the poacher have the best of it if they chance to be the better men, for there is no such leveller of ranks as the curling pond. Consequently it is the most beneficent of social institutions. The team of five on either side is chosen solely on merit, and to-day the village blacksmith happens to be skip or leader, while the great landowner of the parish obsequiously bows to his bidding.

The tees are thirty-eight feet apart, and round each is traced a circle of seven feet in radius. The object, as each end is played out, is to leave one or more stones of the side nearest to the tee. To begin with, the stones are played somewhat short, open for subsequent 'promotion,' and the purpose of the game is either to displace or to guard them. When a well-placed stone has been 'guarded' by successors, the niceties of the game come in. When circumstances become desperate, it may be necessary to resort to brute force and the order is 'Take your wicked will of them.' But the most skilful skips rarely resort to violence when it can possibly be avoided. A dextrous turn of the elbow, or rather of the wrist, gives the stone the 'twist'

communicated by the side stroke to a billiard ball. The stone glides smoothly forward till, taking gradually the curl to right or left, it threads a barely practicable passage between obstructions and steals forward to the tee. Or it takes a delicate inside or outside—that is to say, it chips the edge of another stone with a gentle ricochet. To have done with technicalities, we may say a word of the stones. The weight for the average player is from thirty-five to forty pounds. They should be of the finest grain and the toughest substance: boulders are preferred, for grained stones are apt to be flawed in the blasting. Each has a keen or a duller edge, and they are fitted with reversible handles. The stones that have best stood the test of time and experience come from Crawfordjohn, Burnock Water, or Ailsa Craig. And the player who has once suited himself is as enamoured of his pair as any cricketer of a favourite bat or the golfer of his pet putter. The stones are heavy, but where the ice is good, the difficulty is not to propel but to keep them back, for once started, they travel fast with their own impetus. It is when it ‘is likening to thaw,’ and the ice is somewhat ‘drug,’ that the excitement is rapidly wrought up to fever pitch. It is so difficult then to calculate pace, and the most stolid curler is apt to get nervous. Then rise the cries of ‘Soop her up,’ and the brooms are as busy as those of

London scavengers, till the skip sharply ex-postulates with his 'Haud your hands.' To do them justice, they are only thinking of the fun and the honour of the thing : but although there is no betting money is depending on the game. For the most part at all interparochial matches the stake is the supper, and if the losers must pay the score they take their revenge on the victuals. The standing menu is beef and greens, and they come to it with keen-edged curlers' appetites. As to the flow of toddy that may follow, we refer our readers to the '*Noctes Ambrosianæ*' passim ; but there were Gargantuas and giants in the land in the days of Christopher North and the Ettrick Shepherd. No man could hold up his head at the carouse unless he could carry his twelve tumblers with comfort, and very stiff tumblers they were. We fear Scotsmen have deteriorated, but they can still do fairly well. Then the songs and the toasts and the time-honoured sentiments made the meeting in a manner a Burns festival. The roof rang to the joyous chorus of 'Auld Lang Syne,' with hearty hand-grips, and many a man felt like Scott's convivial friend of the Abbotsford Hunt, that it was the only night in the year worth living for.

Multiply one of these local gatherings by some hundreds and you have the scene at the great annual festival of the Carsbreak Pond, when North of the Forth meets South of the Forth in

battle array. It is the Scottish Epsom of the ice ; the carnival of national curling. It was in 1838 that the Royal Caledonian Curling Club was established to form a union of all the provincial clubs. Every affiliated society may send a team of champions, and special trains are running from all quarters to discharge their joyous freights at Blackford Station in Perthshire. The play is prolonged till night is dropping her curtains, and we can speak feelingly of the scramble and the difficulties of the getting home in the dark. We have been heartily grateful for a place on the engine, half grilled and half frozen between the fire and the frost. There is an extraordinary consumption of spirits and tobacco in the over-crowded carriages, but even the vanquished are in the best of good humour and the exhilarated like Bailey junior are genial in their cups.

III. THE OLD BOWLING GREEN

The old bowling green ! There is a cheery mediæval ring in the words, like the soft chimes from the belfry of some drowsy old Belgian city. The old bowling green associates itself with the merry England of our romantic fancies ; with the England of chivalry when might was right and the outlaws betook themselves to the merry greenwood : with the England of the Tudors, when Henry VIII. proscribed a national game

because it troubled anxious officials in his War Office and interfered with the practice of archery : with the England of the Stuarts and the England of the Commonwealth, for bowls were one of the rare indulgences which all but Puritans of the strictest sect did not care to deny themselves. Bowls flourished under the Stuarts, for Henry's arbitrary statute was never anything more than a dead letter. The strong-willed Tudors always backed out, when they saw they were setting up the backs of the people. All the same, bowls were illegal till his Act was repealed by a Victorian Parliament. And there is the memorable anecdote of a flagrant breach of the law when Frankie Drake and rugged old John Hawkins leisurely played out their game at Plymouth ; when the Invincible Armada had been sighted in the Channel, and the ships that were to shatter it were standing out to sea. The origin of the game is lost in historical mists, though the dry-as-dusts tell us it came over with the Romans. But Butler in his '*Anatomie of Melancholie*,' writing on the eve of the Civil Wars, counts it with keel-pins, coits, and football among the common recreations of the country folk. Not that the game was a monopoly of the vulgar. Henry, when he passed his Draconic ordinance with its penalties, expressly exempted the Nobles and the knights. Then there were bowling greens everywhere—at the castle and fortified hall, in

the burgh and the village. The knight threw off his armour for a loose bowling suit and relaxed on the green beyond the moat and before the barbican. The game was one of the few recreations permitted to austere cloister life, and we can conceive the zest with which the young shavelings broke away from illuminating manuscripts or less engrossing occupations. The mitred abbot could lay aside his dignity for the nonce, taking the gentle exercise that gave an appetite for the refectory. If he were an enthusiast, the smooth green was almost as much his care as the fishponds with the carp and eels, regularly fed and fattened with delicacies from the kitchen. As a game befitting the grave and the sober, it has been in favour from time immemorial with College Dons, and one delightful green that lingers in the memory is under the secular trees of a secluded Cambridge college. On that green I have had many a pleasant afternoon with two of the most renowned of Alpine climbers.

For bowls, which may be elastically played, with eight, six, four, or a couple, is an eminently sociable game. The company is clustered together, and probably made up of old cronies. For some reason it went out of fashion in the reign of Anne, and though it began to gain favour again under the Georges, it was chiefly relegated to the country. The country gentry were conservative, as were the High Tory parsons. A

Squire Western would come in ravenous for his midday dinner, after a long and early morning with the harriers. He and his friends, who had been a huntin' of the hare, dined heavily and drank deeply of the old October. How long they might have sat over the flagons and clay pipes, Heaven only knows, but the bowling green basking in sunshine, broken by flickering shadows, tempted them irresistibly on to the lawn, and if there had been sorely needed temperance societies in those hard-drinking days, unquestionably the bowling green would have been their best ally. The parson played with the churchwardens in the rectory garden, and preached bowls to his parishioners when he desired to draw them away from the beershop. It is strange that Goldsmith should have forgotten them, when he painted his model vicar before the financial collapse of Dr. Primrose. But Goldsmith came from Ireland, and there the game was never in great favour.

The proverb of 'all will go well if bowls run right,' argues for the universal popularity. Hardly one of the old country and coaching inns but had its bowling green : in many of them, now either abandoned or fallen on evil times, you will still see the traces of the circling turf banks. These inns, like Demas, were double-faced. The front looked out on the broad market-place and the busy world : the flying coaches pulled up

before the door : one silken-coated relay was coming up from the yard, while the smoking team of the last stage were clattering down over the cobble stones. The hind boot of the coach had hardly vanished round the corner, before a post chaise rattled up to the door to the shout of 'first pair out.' To the front all was scurry : to the back all was peace in a rural paradise. There was the trim old garden, gorgeous and fragrant with old-fashioned flowers and sequestered among tall, close-clipped yew hedges, sculptured probably into shapes of apes or peacocks and other burlesques of animated nature. These greens with the attractions of cuisine and cellar have often tempted the traveller who only sought repose for a night to defer his departure indefinitely. The players were merry and in high good humour : refreshments in droughty weather were easily obtained ; nor was it much of a drawback that behind the yew hedge and the wall of brick beyond was the good dry skittle alley, devoted to the profanum volgus and patronised by ostler and postboy. Common tastes and sympathies make all the world akin.

Scotland is indebted to England for bowls, but in Scotland the game soon became extraordinarily popular. Now there are any number of Associations, with their codes of rules, rigidly enforced. I always associate bowls in Scotland with romantic and historic scenery. I have

played on a green on the slopes of Benachie, 'where Gowdie rins,' within sight of the battle-field of the red Harlaw—on a green where the tender heather shoots had to be shaven close with the mossy turf. I first played on the greens at the rival hotels of Bridge of Allan, when that much-frequented watering-place was first rising into fame, and those greens are close to the Crooks of Forth, and under the shadow of Dumyat and the romantic Ochils. Burghers used to come over from Stirling of an evening after business hours and mix sociably with Highland officers of the garrison. And I have often looked on at lively games on the 'Meadows' or on Bruntsfield Links, between the Hills of Braid and the Rock of Edinburgh Castle, with George Heriot's picturesque Hospital in the foreground. Naturally the Scots took kindly to bowls, because bowls were but a summer variation of their favourite curling. Curling depends on the caprices of the climate, which bowls do not. All Scotsmen are amphibious. But really and radically the games are identical, though the one goes forward more peaceably than the other. In bowls the excitement and merriment are kept within reasonable bounds: in 'the roaring game' the shouts of the players ring through the frosty air, awakening the echoes in adjacent parishes. In curling the tee is fixed: in bowls the jack is removable. But in both the ball or the stone

glides swiftly forward over a smooth surface, threading its devious way among interposing obstacles, and in both the supreme science is in direction of the bias. In bowls the bias is in the ball : in curling in the wrist. The bowls used to be manipulated with lead like loaded dice : now the bias is given by shaving away the wood on one side, so that the turn when speed slackens can be calculated to a nicety. Brain power and deliberate judgment are indispensable, but there is as much in style as in driving at golf, and the novice should form himself by watching the attitude and delivery of some expert whose performance is recognised as first-rate.



CHAPTER IV

ANGLING RECOLLECTIONS

'DAMN it, Tom, don't be poetical,' said Byron to Moore, when they were admiring a sunset from a balcony in Venice. Don't be poetical or sentimental, I say to myself, when indulging in these angling reminiscences. Yet it is difficult for the most prosaic of mortals to avoid it. The rod takes you into every sort of romantic scenery from the Highland tarn to the chalk-stream of the south : from the flats of Flanders to the lakes and water-rushes of the Salzkammergut, and wherever there is water, even on the towing-path of a canal, there must be some faint reflection of beauty. Among the fondest of my recollections is the murmuring burn, where I first cast a line from a hazel switch and where I landed my first troutlet. It was after many an unsuccessful attempt, but as I do not profess to be an authority on fishing, I am not writing a record of exploits, but simply of associations with scenes and persons. That burn had its rise in a snipe-bog and ran through a darksome coppice, past St. Mary's Holy Well, always tenanted by an overgrown hermit-trout, to the sunny flower-gardens where it flowed

between shaven turf and over artificial cascades. Below, where it lost itself in a wilderness of woods, it was a grand place for guddling. In the haunts of the heron, the wild duck, and the waterhen, under the row of old laburnums, marking the borders of a vanished orchard, the speckled trout were shooting downstream in shoals, when your shadow fell on the water. There was no possibility of throwing a line: you stripped hose and shoon, bared arms to the shoulder, and groped for them beneath the banks or under the mossy stones. There was sure to be sensation of some kind. Tickling a trout you could just touch with the finger-tips, coming on the nest of the mallard or the waterhen among the sedges, or, as was occasionally the case, having the fingers bitten when a water-rat resented intrusion on his privacy. Then came more distant excursions with the keeper, who though paid to look after game was a born poacher. Within a few miles was the Bishop's Loch, so called from some tradition about a prelatical summer lodge, with the tall pines of a rookery rising like cathedral columns over rushy islets. That loch was famous for pike, and between the herons, the pike, and a colony of black-headed gulls, who sheeted an adjacent meadow with their snowy plumage, the trout in the shallows had a bad time of it. An old forester who set night lines was death on the pike, and he used to have warning to wait to

draw them when we made these expeditions, scrambling into the dogcart with break of day. With flat-bottomed coble net, I have helped to draw many a rushy bay on the Highland lochs ; there is always excitement in landing those sharks of the fresh water, and speculating on size and weight, as you saw them savagely gnashing their jaws in the meshes. Out of the eater came forth sweetness, as in Samson's riddle which staggered the Philistines, and the pike was a noble dish, when stuffed with the strongest of savoury herbs and served with a sauce of red wine and spices.

From the moor-burn and lowland loch to the hill-burn and mountain tarn is an easy transition. In the intervals of grouse-shooting, when the sport begins to flag or the birds to pack, angling in the hill-burn is not to be despised. Anyhow you are in for a rough scramble among romantic surroundings. Midge flies may be the more scientific lure, but the worm is the more deadly. Up you go on hands and knees, keeping yourself as carefully out of sight as on a Hampshire chalk stream, casting or dropping with a short line from as short a rod. The run of the trout there used to be beneath a quarter of a pound. But if you risked breaking a leg or barking a shin among slippery rocks and swirling backwaters, you sometimes landed a heavy one. Imprisoned behind some impracticable ledge, he had fattened on a plethora of ground-bait. You crawled up-

wards, holding on to tendrils of the ivy under the boughs of the rowan tree or the weeping birch, and you were enlivened by the wild song of the ring-ousel—the mountain blackbird. Once in the mountains of the watershed between the seas, we passed a couple of nights in the shealing of a friendly shepherd, shunning the treacherous purity of flea-infested sheets, and sleeping on the hay in the cowhouse. Those hill trout, turned out of the baskets almost by the gross and brandered on the girdle with a dressing of oatmeal, were the staple of dinners and suppers. The trout from the burns though small were sweet: those from the tarns above were starvelings, and how they subsisted at all was a marvel. They were so sharpset that when we launched the otter before the breeze—a floating board with lines and innumerable hooks attached—the surface of the water actually bubbled as they fought for the rare privilege of hooking themselves. Sport there was not, but the scenery was superb, for the lakelets were embosomed in peaks and precipices, the nesting places of ptarmigan and eagles.

When I settled in Edinburgh for a time, it was hard to find anything fishable within a morning's easy reach. But the Almond and the Water of Leith still retained some local reputation. As to the Water of Leith, Colquhoun, in '*The Moor and Loch*,' had made special mention of two shady pools 'above the bridge' where he

had often killed weighty trout, and he sent me on many a wild-goose chase. Nevertheless, Edinburgh with help of the rail was capital headquarters for roving. My friend Henry Dick-Cunningham, a keen all-round sportsman, rented Barnes House in Kinross, and we had the free run of Loch Leven when it had not been discovered by the angling clubs. Then there were only two boats upon the loch. One belonged to the fishermen to whom the loch was leased ; the other, always at our disposal, was reserved by the landlord, Sir Graham Montgomery. There were many more pike then than now, but consequently the trout ran heavier as they were far less shy. There was the charm of classic ground, and you were in one of Scott's special countries. For Barnes was the dower house of Blair Adam, where the Blair Adam Club assembled for their excursions, year after year. We drifted between the Castle Island and the long, low sand-isle of St. Serf. I have seen it grey with a gathering of wild geese, where Benarty, so often mentioned by Scott, looked down on us. And we too, like the Chief Commissioner and his friends, made our excursions to Castle Gloom, to the rivulets below the Keirie Craigs, to the Keltie which gave its name to the carrier in 'The Abbot,' and to the burns in Lochore, which passed to young Walter when 'Janie' Jobson married him. I knew her as the venerable Lady Scott, when she kept

solitary house in St. George's Square, but the old lady shrank from mention of Lochore and seemed to wish to bury the old happy memories in oblivion. Another scene that reminded me of the novels was Ramornie not far removed, then in possession of the Heriot Maitlands, where with a son of the house, who distinguished himself at Tel-el-Kebir and died a general, I had many a day on the Eden.

Again, one was wandering after Scott in his Lakeland. What with Stirling, Callander, and the Trossachs there was choice of capital hotels, and to lift us over the cross-roads and carry us up the glens, we used to take a light basket cart with a fast-trotting pony. Though fiery, he was well content to be picketed, so long as he had a sufficiency of forage. We explored the rapids of the Endrick, though we never discovered the Garsh-attachin of Galbraith; we set night lines in the sluggish Teith, but as a rule we went in for the lottery of the Lochs. For there, more than elsewhere, the angler depends on the weather, and it is very much a question of the winds. In my opinion too much of them is worse than too little. Perhaps the sport was best on Loch Ard, but for that reason it was the most frequented. One of our blank days there was nevertheless not the least lively. It was our luck to pick up at the inn the Rev. Dr. Rogers, a county historian of no small repute. The sight of Rob

Roy's broadsword or the Baillie's plough-coulter which used to hang on a tree before the door set him off, and for the livelong day he kept us merry with tradition, story, and staves of old song. In the land of chieftain and cateran, of Roderick and Rob, each cliff and mountain summit was suggestive. When we knocked up parties from the Stirling garrison to Katrine or Vennachar, I fear the fishing often went to the wall, for we seldom seriously gave our minds to it. Nevertheless reasonable sociability is the soul of enjoyable loch-fishing, for solitude with the luck and weather against you tends to suicide. The ideal, to my mind, is a party of four, pairing off in a couple of boats, comparing experiences over dinner and making up a rubber in the evening. Each spring we used to arrange such a quartette for Loch Awe, and jovial times we had ! Then there was no sort of trouble in the matter of boats ; you took care to secure your old familiars in advance—men who knew every yard of the water and could put you up to all manner of wrinkles. Nor did they come throwing up pebbles at the windows at unholy hours to anticipate others on the favourite fishing-grounds. Salmon were seldom met with ; they used to run from the Awe straight up the Orchy. But there is no such music as the rattle of the reel, when a monster from the depths is fast on the trolling line, and in strength and fierce fight the *salmo ferox* of Loch

Awe scarcely yielded to the fish of lonely Loch Erricht.

If the tackle be strong, the result is tolerably certain. There is more of sensation in a mad salmon race, when you hook the fish in some Highland pool. The river runs brawling between precipitous banks ; there are rocks in midstream, there are falls lower down, and, pricked with the barb in the gills, he knows how to make the best of these advantages. It is a toss-up whether the fish or the fisherman comes to grief, for your footing is none of the safest, and he puts you through a course of perilous gymnastics, which rivals his own wild leaps and bounds. In these rivers with their overhanging trees, you have to put in practice casting underhand, or possibly throw the line from some shelving ledge, where you are almost inclined to hope the cast may be unsuccessful. I remember one memorable fight on the Ross-shire Carron, where my heart was more than once in my mouth, and I should not have been sorry to have backed out of the business. It was only with a seven-pound grilse, and I was glad he was not a seventeen-pound salmon. The water was low ; I was fishing with fine gut and a small fly, and holding on with one hand while I cast with the other. He ran off with his fly, while I followed with many a trip and stumble, among mossy boulders and rotten tree roots, with involuntary loosening of the line and lowering

of the rod. Brought up by a thicket, I had to let myself down to the river-bed, handing over the rod meantime to the gillie. Below in the depths, it became acrobatic work, balancing yourself on slippery projections and sometimes betaking yourself to the stream like an otter. He tired and sulked, and neither gingery tugging nor casting of stones would persuade him to make a move. Then when I had grown despondent and careless, he rallied like a giant refreshed, and ran out the reel to within a yard or two. I was up to mid-thigh, on a gravelly bottom, in a swirl that nearly swept me off my legs, and the case was desperate: there was nothing for it but to hold hard and trust to the strength of the feeble tackle. Then, with one of the caprices common to salmon, he came back with a rush to my fishing boots, and when I had hauled in, hand over hand, suddenly and most unexpectedly threw up the sponge. When he was gaffed and landed, the tiny hook was holding only by a shred of skin, and that is a fair sample of an ordinary episode in Highland salmon fishing. I was privileged to have some capital days on the Lyon, and I know few more pleasant angling quarters than Fortingall. The Lyon flows through oak woods, beeches, and Scotch firs, there are many pools where fresh-run fish are always lingering, and above Meggernie bridge are some superb grilse casts. But few streams are more uncertain.

Less treacherous than the Findhorns, where the hill rains will come down in flood like a precipitous wall, the Lyon with its sources in the Blackmount oscillates between droughts and freshes. Sometimes in the summer it shrinks like the Atbara of the Soudan, but the fish are there, and a freshet brings the water into fine order. And failing salmon, there is excellent troutng in the wild and romantic feeders that come down the glen above Meggernie.

There are salmon fishers who profess to scorn troutng. That may be all very well for men who can afford to pay fancy rents for salmon stretches, or who have their welcome with the great landowners on Tay, Tweed, or Spey ; but less fortunate mortals, lovers of the picturesque, may be well content to put up with the humbler sport. There are many rivers, utterly ruined for salmon by crives and other obstructions at the mouths, to say nothing of poisonous paper mills and chemical works, where the upper scenery is still unspoiled, and the troutng as good as ever. The Aberdeenshire Don is a case in point. I know it well from the sea to the sources. It has less reputation than the grander and more fashionable Deeside—there are leading guide-books which altogether ignore it—and it is all the more attractive to the meditative pupil of Walton. For quiet charm, snug village inns and modest historical associations, I back it against

any river in Scotland. Beginning with Byron's black 'Brig o' Balgonie,' past the dowy Holmes of Grandholme, you follow it where 'Gowdie rins at the back o' Benachie,' under the 'Red Harlaw,' to the Bridge of Alford where Montrose won the memorable victory, bought dearly by the death of Lord Gordon. There is the paradise of Monymusk—Monymusk gives its name to one of the most popular of old Scotch airs—so called from the superb Scotch and silver firs, only second to those of Dunkeld; and thence you ascend to Colquhonie and Corgarff in the rough Forbes country, where Lord Mar had such difficulty in rallying his vassals when he raised the white standard of revolt in the rising of the fifteen. The Ythan and the Ugie, rivers of the bleak Buchan flats, cannot compete in any way with Don and Dee, but the former, especially at the mouth, was superb for sea trout. The inn at Ellon used to be a popular resort of worthy burghers from Aberdeen, and there I had more than one pleasant evening with Giles, the Aberdeenshire Landseer, versed in the technicalities of his art and the ways of wild animals. With his silvan paintings, which fetched high prices, he decorated the hunting-lodge at Braes of Gight, which had passed into the possession of the Earls of Aberdeen from the Gordon ancestry of Byron, and also the gilded saloon of the 'Queen,' the first of the Northern steamers which went in for

artistic decoration. Another and more celebrated North-country artist whom I used to meet at the Invercauld Arms at Braemar, when troutting in the tributaries of the upper Dee, was Phillip, surnamed in Scotland Philip of Spain, from his predilection for Spanish subjects. It was a piquant contrast to talk of Madrid and Velasquez, of Seville and Murillo, with the brawl of the Cluny water almost within earshot.

I knew something of the scenery of the Stinchar in Ayrshire, celebrated by Colquhoun in the 'Moor and Loch' for the interminable fight of his son with a monster salmon. We used to have fair sport there, though it was subject to sudden flooding like the Lyon, but though the day might be a blank, there was sure to be merriment in the evening. We always went to the Stinchar in strong military force, the guests of old Mr. Kennedy of Daljerrick, a regular habitué of the Edinburgh United Service Club. For many a night before, in the smoking-room, the programme of the impending visit was discussed, and the host could make certain of good company. Excepting my humble self all belonged to the élite of the Scientific Corps. There was Fitzroy Somerset who had married the daughter of a Perthshire laird, and had become a half-acclimatised Scotchman: there was Grant, the future Sir Robert and Inspector of Fortifications, and General Heriot Maitland to whom I have already

referred ; and not the least brilliant of the party was Bailey, distinguished at Woolwich, a zealous soldier and accomplished artist, cut off, unhappily, long before his prime. I have fished little in the Scottish border rivers, tempting as they were with their associations : though I have cast flies and dredged with worm in the Manor water, and some of the upper tributaries of the Tweed. But those of Scott's 'Mountainous Northumberland' I know fairly well, and nowhere is the late spring more delightful, if you hap to fall in with kindly weather. Facing the blast of a belated blizzard is another thing. Chief among them is the Coquet, famous in Border song, immortalised by Roxburgh's 'Angler's Garland.' Take the Coquet where you will, you can hardly go wrong, and there is everything to inspire the poet or a Waltonian. In my time you might have done much worse than put up at the 'Rising Sun,' beside the dark arch which spanned the deep river, at the bottom of the long steep street of Warkworth. Above, between the square keep of the Percies and the Hermitage the river runs between winding banks and hanging woods, the haunts alike of the hawk and cushat dove. It widened in broad green straths to close in again in such secluded vales as sheltered Brinkburn Priory, and you passed such famous fishing pools as Brinkburn Wheel or such rushes through narrow gorges as Rothbury Thrums. It was at

its wildest from Weldon Bridge to Elsden, but to my mind it was at its best betwixt and between. There between lowland and upland, it was most seductive and characteristic in May or early June. The green hills as they receded were blazing with patches of fiery furze : the air was fragrant with the smell of honeydew, and the scene was vocal with the song of the skylark and the chant of innumerable linnets from the furze thickets. You heard besides the bleating of invisible sheep and the bark of the collie from invisible glens. In the foreground was the whitewashed home-stead, half-sheltered by some storm-twisted ashes, and here and there you might change the bank of the river, by tripping it gingerly over half-submerged stepping-stones. These Northumbrian rivers could never lead you wrong, and the only question was the sleeping accommodation. Not excepting the Coquet, the Glen is perhaps the finest of these troutng streams, and I used to fish it from the old Black Bull at Wooler. In all the northern country from every height you can see the Cheviots, often shrouded in cloud and gloom, and King Ida's stronghold of Bambrough standing up seaward to the eastward. I never did anything to speak of on the shallow Alne, though it was a luxurious ramble through the ducal park to the heathery moorlands, past the ruined abbeys of Alnwick and Hulme. And so far as the fishing went I had disappointment

when I went to Chillingham, though consoled by the wonderful sight of the wild cattle. Led by the keeper, we walked up wind through an enclosed circular plantation, and safely from behind the strong fencing saw the nearest of the herd almost within arm's length, with a patriarchal bull charging at the palings, stamping and bellowing in impotent rage.

It is a change from the brawling rivers of the North, always liable to be brought down in heavy spate, to the tranquil course of the southern chalk stream. I never had the patience or the skill to master the arts of fine fishing. I never could throw the fly light as thistledown to an inch, or cast it insidiously against a tree trunk to drop noiselessly over some expectant fish. But for some years I had a house at Farningham on the Darent and saw something of the practice of the experts. The heavy trout seemed seldom to stir from their favourite haunts, and each of them came to be known by headmark. So that when one was landed, the triumph was mingled with regret ; there was the certainty of less excitement for the future. One of the biggest of the Darent trout was a sleeping partner in the Lion Inn, a most comfortable fishing hostelry, almost within gunshot of my house. His fame had spread far and wide, and thither each Saturday and Sunday flocked his admirers. He was always to be found at home and yet no one knew exactly where to

have him. Now he was under this stone, now under another, and again he was beneath the roots of the alders over the way. The short stretch of stream leased by the innkeeper was planted thickly of a Sabbath by respectable citizens—it was a case of John Burley and the one-eyed pike—who, discarding jealousies in general despondency, struck up friendships on the strength of common failures. It was a black day for the Lion's landlord when that trout mysteriously disappeared.

I only once had a day on the Test, and never had the good fortune to try either Itchen or Kennet. If I had, I should probably have failed dismally. But I regretted much that on two flying tours round Ireland I had little time to accept friendly invitations. Moreover, they were exceptionally dry seasons, and English anglers were in despair. I carried rods along with me, but used them almost as little as mackintosh or umbrella. I did try my luck at Gweedore on the Clada, a most inviting river which flows in front of the hotel, and was congratulated on my exceptional good fortune in landing a seven-pound grilse. A few years before, the gentleman who leased two miles of the river had killed sixty-five salmon in five days. Gweedore was a sort of Irish Tibby Shiels, on a far more magnificent scale, a two-storied building in bleak North-Western Donegal, and the annual resort of a

community of anglers. Everything, except the dinner menu, was suggestive of fish and fishing, from the salmon on the weathercock to the rods hung up by the half-dozen on hooks beneath the leaden waterspouts, and landing nets by the bundle in the corners of the verandah. As far as the salmon went I found the Clada a failure, but had a pleasant day among the small trout in some tiny lochs among the hills, where the hotels maintained boats and boatmen ; and from Dunglow in the Marquis of Conyngham's country, twelve miles to the south, I made a lamentable mess of the famous sea-trout fishing, where a river links a hundred rushy lakelets to the sea. There is no trusting the good faith of Donegal boatmen, though they were the best of good company—by the way, like many of my car-drivers, I found them total abstainers. But like the delusive prophets of Israel, they prophesied false things, and consulted as to fishing, they predicted the 'soft weather' and the gentle breezes which never came.

Those Donegal boatmen were sad 'deluderers,' but appearances on many picturesque continental streams were still more deceptive and disappointing. You went out on an inspiring day, you saw water all that the heart of angler could desire ; you grudged the time indispensable for rigging up the rod—and came home with a light or empty basket. The fact

was that the streams, to the west of the Austrian dominions, were remorselessly netted and indefatigably poached. The trout seemed to have got so shy that there was no seducing them. Weld, in his charming book on Brittany, had raised my hopes about Breton angling to the highest pitch. Things must have sadly changed since his time. Yet I did not blame him for a false lead : nothing could be more enjoyable than those summer strolls by the streams from Dinan, Lannion, or Morlaix ; past grey stone farmsteads, picturesque village churches, sedgy mill-dams and mossy mill-wheels, with the orange-tiled buildings crumbling to decay, and my companion Augustus Vansittart, Cambridge high-class man and Bursar of Trinity, to look on and laugh at my ill-luck. I came back with half a dozen or so of tiny coarse fish to find delicate trout served at the evening table d'hôte. It was much the same in my angling excursions from Spa, though I did rather better in more remote recesses of the Ardennes. So it was in the swift green rivers of the Western Pyrenees, which I often fished with signal unsuccess in company of such accomplished anglers as George Hughes, the brother of 'Tom Brown,' and Ferdinand St. John, of wide continental repute and the hero of the memorable Neapolitan duel with the Count of Arragon. Yet from the windows of the dining saloon at the hotel at Eaux Chaudes, we looked

down on the vivier of the Gave, where the chef was ladling out the plump epicures he served up to us with claret sauce. There the melting of mountain snows in the spring heats may have had something to do with our failure, as in the grey glacier-waters of Eastern Switzerland, where Dumas père went fishing by moonlight, with the boots of the auberge, armed with sickle and lantern. I had one rather more satisfactory outing to the lake of Bienne and the slopes of the Jura, when my companion was Robert Goff, afterwards colonel in the Guards, and one of the most finished amateurs in water-colour, especially in all that concerns the water. Nothing can surpass the spirit or beauty of his Thames sketches below bridges. The only man I know who rivals him is another friend, Hallam Murray, who first excelled himself in his 'On the Old Road to Florence,' and who kindly illustrated my own 'Old Time Travel.' Goff's brother-in-law Baird, who had a charming summer residence at Ouchy, once took me out trolling on Lake Leman. The Genevoise trout were hard to secure, but rare eating when hooked and landed. Again on a solitary angling cruise from the Trois Couronnes at Vevey, I had a somewhat awkward experience. A squall came down the valley of the Rhone, and the slumbering lake became suddenly tempest-tossed. There was nothing for it but to scud before the gale for St. Gingolph on the Savoy

shore. One could not scull and bale at the same time, and so much water was shipped before the boat was beached that it was an uncommonly near shave.

In Tyrol and the Salzkammergut the sport was often first-rate. Even forty years ago, the omnipresent English anglers were beginning to rent fishings, but as a rule the streams and lakes were relatively neglected. Spring after spring, I spent weeks at Ischl, the most enchanting of all continental baths. Before the fashion of Vienna followed their Kaiser thither, you had Ischl pretty much to yourself. The 'Kaiserinn Elisabeth,' subsequently burned down, to rise again phoenix-like from its ashes, was the most luxurious of quarters. The great bay window of the salon looked out on the Traun, and the landlord rented several miles of the river. The air was fragrant with meadow hay and warm walnut leaves, the river meanders between meadow and cliff, between rapid rushes and deep, shaded pools. Never, even in the rapid streams of the Schwarzwald, have I come across more vigorous trout, and unless there was thunder in the air, they were generally keen of appetite. More than once when I was a novice there, I fancied I must have hooked a prize : it was only that one trout had taken the tail-fly, while another had simultaneously made a swallow of the drop. And if there were electricity in the air, as was often the case, you had

only to dig up worms and dangle them in one of those darksome nooks for the grayling which ran uncommonly large. Though the Ischl grayling is a rank impostor, he makes a gallant fight for a minute or so and then knocks under ignominiously. I might enlarge on loch-fishing in the neighbouring Gmunden See, made classical by Sir Humphry Davy, and on more distant excursions to the romantic Gosau Lakes, where I had made friends with an imperial forester who put me up in his lodge, and where I fraternised with his family of long-descended dachshunds, who made melancholy moans on the shore when I took shipping on the lakes.



CHAPTER V

THE LAST OF THE ROAD

I AM old enough to have seen the last of the road before it was superseded by the rail. The coaches were still running in Scotland and in counties to the north of the Tyne when the great trunk lines were being opened in England. It was a memorable journey when I posted in childhood from Aberdeen to Edinburgh. I remember the old chariot painted in yellow picked out with black, and still possess the imperials that were strapped on the roof and the great triangular bonnet case in black leather which fitted in beneath the dickie. Of solid material, all are as serviceable now as when they were turned out with the chariot by the firm in Long Acre. The imperials were left on the roof till the journey was over, for all the posting inns advertised lock-up coach-houses. The chariot was the respectable family vehicle, as opposed to the light britska affected by gay bachelors. Inside there was roomy accommodation for two, with a small party like myself sitting bodkin. There was a box convenient under the cushions ; there was a 'sword case,' suggestive of the days of the highwaymen, where you could

stow away sticks and umbrellas ; there were straps on the roof for suspending hats, &c., and there were capacious pockets on the doors and in front, which bulged with bottles and packets of sandwiches. Light as it was, in comparison with the coaches, it was a lumbering vehicle and set on high springs. A flight of steps was let down, and the landlords showed their gallantry by guarding the dresses of ladies from the wheel. In the spacious rumble behind, the man and maid made themselves as comfortable as might be, and there was the dickie in front, on which the insiders could seat themselves, when the weather was fine and they were in love with the scenery. When posting with a pair over heavy roads it was rather cruel work for overtired cattle, and there was more than one long stage, as I recollect, where we travelled *en seigneur* with four horses. At notable hotels, as in Perth, where you are expected to break the journey, the arrival was heralded by the cracking of whips : the ostlers came rushing up the yard, the waiters appeared with napkins over their arms, and behind the bowing landlord the smart chambermaid with face wreathed in smiles was ready to show the lady to her room. I know, whether it was the George or the Salutation, that the Perth dinner after the tedious drive seemed to me the very ideal of luxury, when the landlord followed the soup tureen into the well-warmed room and lifted the silver cover with a

flourish of his arm. It was a long drop from the private chariot to the hired post-chaise. I fancy I saw the post-chaise at its worst, for with the shadow of the steam-engine falling over the roads, it seemed not worth while to renew them, and they would hardly bear patching up. They were generally chartered then for short distances and single stages. One breakdown I remember of a ramshackle affair between Killin and Dalmally, where we were literally landed in a ditch, and had to take refuge from the downpour in a cottage. Fortunately there was a 'smithy' not far off, and the smith succeeded in repairing damages, so that we were quit for a few hours' delay. How the axles used to creak and the cracked windows to rattle! The post-boys, as they were facetiously styled, were for the most part antique survivals of the fittest: weather-beaten old men, grumpy of speech, and small blame to them. Bleached by exposure like the scarlet of their jackets, they plied their rusty spurs at the hills as if they had St. Vitus's dance in the legs, and strained their lean wrists at the descents in holding up their hard-mouthed horses. I have seen them helped out of the saddle at the end of a watery stage, when the ostler who rubbed them down with a wisp of straw, in the steam of the jaded horses, might have claimed the medal of the Humane Society, as one of the fraternity remarked in 'Pickwick.'

But if the post-chaise was verging towards decrepitude, the last of the stage coaches were then in their glory. Except possibly at Chester, no town in the kingdom could make such a show as Aberdeen. At three in the afternoon groups gathered before the Royal Hotel to see half a dozen coaches or more draw up before the door. The mails, of course, timed everywhere to the minute, were specially well-horsed and appointed. The burly guards in their gold-laced scarlet made a grand show, and as they climbed to their tripods, when the coachman had gathered up the reins and the helpers had swept the cloths from the horses, they woke the echoes of the street with music more or less melodious. Some contented themselves with a simple performance on the 'yard and a half of tin': others with a finer ear for symphonies played popular airs on the key-bugle. When the last mailbag had come round the corner from the post-office all the teams were away to the chime of the clock. The mails were excellently horsed, but they were surpassed by the Southern Defiance. It was owned and horsed by Captain Barclay of Ury and Mr. Watson of Keiller. In spite of more hilly roads and inferior horse provender, it rivalled the Shrewsbury Wonder or the Devonport Quicksilver. Moreover, there was less limit as to luggage than on the mails. Yet summer and winter, including stoppages for meals and the passage of a ferry with a

change of coaches, it punctually did its ten miles an hour. Lavishly horsed as it was, the wear and tear of horseflesh was considerable. Naturally in those juvenile days I made no pretension to the box seat. But I had generally a seat immediately behind, for I had been consigned to the care of guards and coachmen by a relative—a great ally of Barclay's—mentioned in Nimrod's 'Northern Tour' as having sold a Tilbury horse to Lord Rodney for the unprecedented price of 700 guineas. It was glory to travel by the Defiance, but the drawback was the early start. A few minutes before five, you were stretching yourself on the pavement before the Royal, having swallowed some boiling coffee and carrying a crust in your hand. 'Up you get,' said the friendly guard, and there you were with a tight great-coat and a flimsy plaid to wrap round your legs. The first two stages were about the bleakest drive in bleak northern Scotland with nothing between the outsides and the North Pole. With a brilliant dawn there are magnificent sea views, but we thought of nothing but the breakfast awaiting us at the Mill Inn in Stonehaven. Regularly as the coach pulled up at seven, 'the Captain' was to be seen on the steps. He was always there to inspect his teams and he dined early on purpose to meet his down coach. What he looked for was horses that would go the pace: and his coachmen were selected for his own qualities—

strong arms, cool judgment, and iron nerve. If any of the country gentlemen had a vicious rogue of blood and substance, he was passed on to the Defiance and soon brought to his bearings. I remember a changing place at the North Esk, with an awkward slope to an ugly bridge, and there by some fatality we often had trouble. One time our leaders were a kicker and a bolter : one was tearing at the traces while the other was lashing out over the bars. On another occasion there would be a sullen brute who threw himself down and could only be persuaded to get up by firing an armful of straw under him. By that time his three yoke-fellows were all on end like so many unicorns rampant. It amazes me now that coaches so seldom came to grief and that smashes or capsizes were not far more frequent. Another coach I travelled on was the Chevy Chase, traversing the romantic Border country from Edinburgh to Newcastle. It was chock full of Cockney tourists, and we saw little of the scenery, for we were wrapped in mists and the ladies would keep up their umbrellas. Those umbrellas were invariably a nuisance. They got into the eyes ; they guided the drip down your coat collar, and it was with malicious satisfaction you welcomed the gust which turned them inside out or sent them drifting down the wind like parachutes.

Serious accidents to the coach were com-

paratively rare, but drowsiness was a danger difficult to guard against. The passengers on the outside of the benches behind the coachman or facing the guard were hanging between earth and heaven. One foot was on the footboard, the other generally dangling in space. Even when wideawake, a lurch might prove awkward, and there were sharp corners from the narrow high street into many a market-place, where the top-heavy vehicle took a perilous swing. When you began to nod towards nightfall, or dropped into a snooze in the small hours, you were sitting in the very shadow of death, unless fortunate in a wakeful neighbour. One heard of it when a whole coach load came to grief, but I have reason to believe there were many single catastrophes which were hushed up and never reported. On the box you were better off, for you were under the care of the coachman. In later days when going north for salmon fishing or grouse shooting, travelling outside through the night from Aberdeen, I used to catch the northern mail at Inverness for Dingwall or Tain. I remember one glorious spring morning when in the flush of dawn I scrambled up beside the driver, who was an old acquaintance. If I had refreshed myself with laudanum instead of rum and milk I could not have felt more sleepy. It was a superb bit of galloping ground that skirted the Beauly Firth and my friend put his horses along. The ozone

from the ocean, laden with the intoxicating fragrance of the seaweed, might have lulled a victim of chronic insomnia, and if my friend had not kept his driving elbow continually in my ribs, I should certainly have been a subject for the coroner, had there been coroners to the north of the Tweed.

It is another marvel how coaches sufficed for the traffic. From end to end you must book in advance, in defiance of any ulterior arrangements or the elements. At intermediate stations it was all haphazard, especially on side roads served by a single daily coach. At one house which was very much my home, we used to wait at the blacksmith's forge, where the letter-bags were daily delivered by the mailcart. Often have I taken refuge by the glow of the smithy fire where Vulcan was hammering a horse's shoe or a plough-share, in bitter wind or in driving sleet. When the 'Earl of Fife,' sarcastically criticised by 'Nimrod,' was sighted rising the hill, you speculated anxiously on the heavy deck load and strove to count the heads of the passengers. Even if it were crowded, generally, by favour of the guard, you could stow yourself precariously on the top of the luggage. Guards and coachmen exercised a despotism, tempered by tips. Proprietors, who could not control them in details, left a great deal in their power. By tacit understanding, if they gave a passenger a lift for a few

miles, they might pocket the douceur ; all that was expected was that they should not be found out. I fancy they made a good thing of the delivery of parcels, never entered in the waybill. The foreboot was under the legs of the coachman, as the letter-bags in the Government mails were under the feet of the guard. But on the stage coaches the hindboot was a locker opened from beneath, and the burly guardian was often to be seen like Bailey junior behind Mr. Tigg's cabriolet, balancing himself adroitly on the back step, extracting or tossing in parcels without the coach slackening its speed. Naturally, having so much in their power in the way of good offices, coachmen and guards were much courted on the road. Nor was it altogether out of gratitude for favours to come, for it was part of their business to make themselves agreeable and they were recommended to the proprietors by shining social qualities. I made one memorable night journey from Inverness to Aberdeen on the Northern Defiance. It was the last professional trip of a guard, who, like Mr. Puffington in 'Soapy Sponge,' was an 'amazin' popular man.' At every stage friends were sitting up to give him a last send-off ; jovial farmers or burghers climbed on to the roof to accompany him to the next change ; whisky and strong toddy flowed like water : the night owls were roused with song and catch ; and when I was dropped next morning at Inverury,

the Defiance was a full hour behind her time. It was a remarkable tribute to the merits of the guard that neither he nor the coachman was called over the coals.

Borrow in '*Lavengro*' makes a savage attack on the crack coachmen of the time, denouncing them as the toadies of the rich and the tyrants of the poor. But Borrow, who, according to his biographer, never forgave Sir Walter Scott for not acknowledging a copy of '*Lavengro*', was always 'contrary' and given to flying in the face of opinion. So far as my experience goes, like Mark Twain's cat, whose confidence was betrayed in an experiment at quartz-mining, 'I think different.' I found them capital fellows and friendly protectors of unsophisticated innocence. I knew they were welcome guests in many a hospitable country house, invited to a seat at the dinner table when the cloth was drawn. One case of the kind I recollect, when the coachman, though seated modestly on the edge of a chair, joined in the horse-talk with respectful intelligence, but firmly declined a third glass of port. Not that he made any profession of temperance elsewhere, and it was marvellous the amount of liquor these men could carry discreetly. They were hand-in-glove with every landlord down the road, and had a fatherly or loverlike smile—as the case might be—for the beaming landlady or the buxom barmaid. The coachman with a

reputation made a rich harvest. The shilling or eighteenpence handed over when he announced he was going no further was really a tax levied on each passenger. It was not compulsory, but it could not be refused. What they looked to was the liberal gratuity for the privilege of occupying the box seat and profiting by the professional's conversation. Handing over the reins always meant half a guinea at the least. Notorious whips like Captain Barclay, who knew as much as any professional, might safely be trusted with the lives of the lieges, and no passenger was likely to raise any objection. But there were aspiring young bloods as foolhardy as Phaeton when he undertook to drive the Coursers of the Sun, and if they hung back the coachman would sometimes encourage them by asking if they had not their driving-gloves on. Then some crusty old gentleman would cut up rough, and threaten an information for infringement of the Act, which would mean a fine and possibly dismissal. I remember one sporting youth who had a share in the coach, gathering up the reins and setting his foot on the roller-bolt when an old lawyer popped his head out of the window and protested. There was a hot dispute till the lawyer got out, declaring that if the amateur persisted, he would order a post-chaise and four, and drive it at his expense. The argument was irresistible and the amateur gave in, but he was a youth of resource. As I

heard, precisely the same scene was enacted a few weeks afterwards, but with a different result. In the interval he had been officially appointed extra coachman with a wage of a shilling a week, and so he came off with flying colours.

You wanted weight as well as science to work a succession of lively teams with a minimum of exertion. A spare coachman was the exception that proved the rule, and unless he were compact of steel and whipcord he was soon used up. Men who ate enormously, drank freely, and never walked a yard when they could help it were apt to become corpulent like old Mr. Weller. I never saw them condescend to the ladder brought out for the use of the ladies, but they would sometimes be helped on to the box by the combined strength of ostlers and helpers. Settled in their seat they were solid as the Sphinx, and, with the reins folded down in the washleather gloves and the arm well squared over the massive chest, it would have taken a hard-mouthing team to tear themselves loose, even had twitches been dispensed with. It was a sad downcome for those portly gentlemen, wedded beyond all toryism to the ancient ways, when they were reduced first to driving a 'unicorn' and then to a paltry pair. Stage by stage, the fast coach they had been working had to retreat before the advancing rail. Its splendours faded as expenses were cut down. I know not how they managed to get through

their money, but few had saved. Two of them I came across in later years : one was in the poorhouse and philosophically contented, very grateful for half-crowns and gifts of tobacco : the other, like Mr. Weller, had married a well-to-do 'widder' and sat smoking his churchwarden in the bar of her public. A friend, who had bought a pair of young horses for his mail phaeton, asked the old man to see them across the Burntisland ferry and superintend their breaking-in at his seat in Kinross-shire. The invitation given in sheer kindness had an ample reward. The gouty old gentleman was the best of company ; with a rich répertoire of anecdote and reminiscence, he led the talk in the smoking-room while we all respectfully listened, and he had much to say from personal knowledge in illustration of the coaching prints on the walls.

Highland conveyances of all kinds are in striking contrast to the Quicksilvers and Royal Mails of the South which were run off the roads by the steam engine. The rickety old post-chaise, with its cracked windows and groaning springs, was the conveyance of the more affluent travellers who did not indulge in a private carriage. That is to say, when they could get it, for latterly the post-chaise was only to be found on the more frequented routes. Then a survival of the past, like the superannuated stage-coach, it has often run up the stableyard into a back shed, to be

utilised as a roosting place for the poultry. Elsewhere in the far North and the wild West the only means of moving about was the 'machine,' and so it still is styled in those back-of-the-world districts. It might be anything from a gig or dogcart to a wagonette. Even flourishing inns doing a fair amount of tourist traffic could seldom boast of more than one or two. The shrewd innkeeper knew his business: he had no notion of horses eating their heads off in the winter; the last idea in his mind was to speed the parting guest. When you alighted at the inn you had to await your turn, and the Highland tour on wheels was in every way a discipline of patience. In the season, with the long stages and short commons, no cattle were so severely overtasked. Cruel the drivers were not, for the indolent man is merciful to his beast, and as they were never in a hurry themselves, they seldom hustled the horses. As you crawled up one ascent after another, and in common prudence saved the shaky forelegs on the down track, you had ample time to appreciate the scenery, when it was not dimmed in a downpour or swathed in impenetrable mist. Hard worked as he was between the shafts, the horse of all work had an occasional turn at the plough, and had been taken up from soft food on the rushy meadow grass, with slight stimulant in shape of sour oats and musty hay. It is a remarkable fact, but I can hardly remember

ever having seen a lively young animal in Highland gig harness : it was a different thing altogether when you were riding a hard-pulling 'shelt' through the bogs of Skye or the Shetland morasses. Yet the galled old stager had good reason to bless the Jewish observance of the Scottish Sabbath. Whether from humanity or principle, or regard for opinion, as a rule no money could tempt your host to send out his machine of a Sunday. 'Na, na, I dinna hold wi' Sabbath breaking' was the invariable response, with possibly a suggestion that you would do well to attend the parish kirk, which might be half a dozen long moorland miles away.

In these aggravating Highland drives much depended on your driver. When he led the horse round to the door I would cast an anxious glance at his face. Sometimes it was a case of impenetrable stolidity ; worse even than the companion of Scott's friend Will Clerk, the 'wight' looked as if he could not even talk about bend-leather. If there was a quick, furtive side glance or a twinkle in the eye, then you saw your way straight before you. Hurry no man's cattle is a golden rule in the intercourse between the Sassenach and the Hielandman. Bide your time ; curb your loquacity ; proffer a tobacco pouch of strong Cavendish ; pass on casually the flask of Glenlivat whisky, and the fish rises to the fly, giving play if handled judiciously. One

old fellow in West Ross, a drunken vagabond, who worked for the inn within a mile of our shooting lodge, became a great ally of mine. He could carry his liquor discreetly and was seldom overtaken save on the Sabbath. A queer blend of piety and superstition, he was full of his 'cracks' when you had won his confidence. He came of a smuggling race, and took an honest pride in the lawless exploits of his forefathers on storm-beaten coasts, where sheriff officers and gamekeepers carried their lives in their hands. One evening, when we supped together in a turf-thatched change house where we were weather-bound, he waxed confidential after the third or fourth tumbler. He told of his father's death resulting from the ghost of a man whose fall from the cliffs had never been accounted for. And he hinted at some similar prognostication, vouchsafed himself by his grandmother's second sight. Say what you will, it is impossible not to be impressed by the intense conviction on the solemn face, in a cabin where you could scarcely distinguish the blackened rafters through the clouds of the peat reek. So he would speak with bated breath of the water horse that stabled in the unfathomed depths of Loch Suainabhal, believed sometimes to cross his breed with those refractory hill ponies who gave the drovers infinite trouble in herding them to the Falkirk Tryste.

A very different character was the driver of the mailcart from Dingwall to Skye Ferry. A fluent talker and breezy man of the world, he was familiar with all kinds of company, from the sportsman or Cockney tourist to the shepherds and keepers, or even down to the packmen and vagrants to whom he gave an occasional lift. He prided himself on ready wit, but really he had only a short allowance of standing jokes, dragged in to do duty on all possible occasions. On the other hand, he had the gossip of the country at his finger-ends and would have been a godsend to the novelist in quest of local colour. And what a mixed society that mailcart carried ! There were lairds and burghers, gillies exchanging the herring fishing for an autumnal spell on the moors, and buxom young women shifting their situations. Those ladies, though not over-particular, were sometimes put to the blush, for the gentlemen lost no opportunity of liquoring up, and then the conversation got remarkably easy and animated. I remember one occasion when the vehicle broke down in a drenching downpour near the inn of Achnashiel, and we passed a sociable and merry evening together in the public parlour. The marvel was that such accidents were not more frequent, for the cart was piled with boxes, portmanteaux, gun-cases, casks of tar for the sheep washing, and coils of wire fencing, with a couple of setters or a collie chained on the

top and continually slipping over at peril of being strangled.

To change the scene to the South and less primitive methods of progression. For years I used to be a familiar of Stirling Castle when rather fast Highland regiments were in garrison there for recruiting purposes. Short leave in those days was easily obtained : we were always going on fishing expeditions or arranging picnics to Callander, Loch Ard, or the Trossachs. Scratch teams were the order of the day, for no man would condescend to drive a single horse when he could club with a comrade to get up a tandem. Tandem driving is always a case of trusting in Providence, but when the leader is more used to the saddle than the collar, and fractious in both, you may count upon casualties with tolerable confidence. Reprobates who would have been consigned to the coaches in the old days used to be picked up for a 20*l.* note or less, and when short of work and bursting with corn, they were exceedingly awkward to handle. Consequently smashes or spills were of no infrequent occurrence. The Castle was a strong position in the middle ages, but with the sharp turns and the precipitous street, when on wheels, it is far more dangerous to get out than to get in. My bones ache now when I think of one incident. When fishing rods and luncheon basket had been stowed away, the leader jibbed, reared, and fairly sat down. There

were willing hands enough to give us a send off, so reconsidering the matter he bolted. He shot across the court, spun round out of the gates, and I who was holding on behind came a portentous cropper on the cobble stones. Fortunately a thick coat broke the fall, and after all I was better off than my friends who came to signal grief at the bottom of the High Street. On another occasion when coachman I congratulated myself on driving through the town successfully and was spinning along merrily to Stirling Bridge—with its many historical associations. It is somewhat arched and rather narrow, and rising the other end was a train of travelling tinkers with their donkey carts. One unlucky ass began to bray ; the horses were running in snaffles, and before I could get a fair pull the collision came off. It was a clear crash and smash, and never was there a more sonorous spill than when we came rattling down on the top of the pots and pans. When we picked ourselves up, though there were no doctors' bills to pay, it was a good morning's work for the tinkers, the saddler, and the coachbuilder.

The picnic parties to the Trossachs, with varied procession of conveyances, brought out all the latent romance of the Keltic character. Generally a scratch four-in-hand would lead, and tandems tailed off to the dogcart with a single screw who put his fired forelegs forward in the

rear like a terrier lolloping along in the wake of the foxhounds. We baited at Callander and refreshed at the Brig of Turk. That no way interfered with the jovial al fresco luncheon on Helen's Isle, where the Highlander with his foot on his native heath chorussed the war songs of the MacGregor and the Clan Alpine, and spouted the 'Lady of the Lake' with emphasis which did credit to his fervid appreciation. A banquet ordered in advance awaited us at the Trossachs Hotel, and the most convivial evening I remember was when we forgathered with a committee of the Glasgow Town Council, charged with bringing the waters of the loch to the cisterns of the citizens. Baillie Nicol Jarvie was resuscitated ; never have I heard better songs or Scotch stories, and the excitement culminated when we woke the night owls with the catch of 'Auld Lang Syne.' I drop a veil over the incident when a portly burgher essayed for a bet to climb the flagstaff and strike the Union Jack. He gave up at the go-off when he tore his knee open on the hook which secured the halliards. Horses never go better than by moonlight. How often have I been exhilarated by the rhythmical resonance of the hoofs, coming home from merry dinners at Richmond through the chestnut avenues of Bushey Park, or on some lonely country road where you were inclined to nod on the coach-box ! But never was there a more soothing charm in the hoof-beats than

when, retracing that classical track to Loch Katrine, in pace we emulated the gallop of Fitz-James from Coilantogle ford to his castle of Snowdoun. Landlord and ostler were always on the look-out at the little wayside inns where we drew up to give the horses meal and water, though, in spite of tip and liberal pay, they may have cursed the early hours of the military.

A propos of the Highlands the mail phaeton looms before me. I fancy it has gone out of fashion, and verily it had its inconveniences. There was not much stowage for luggage, and when you faced the rain-drift or the whirling snow blizzard the hood was rather a trap than a protection. But in fine weather and on smooth roads, to my mind there was no carriage to equal it. With that sheltering and shady hood in a sunny calm or a straight-down drizzle it beat the double dogcart all to nothing. As for the identical phaeton I have in my mind's eye, it was a deep olive green, picked out with thin black lines. The plain black harness, with no gleam or glitter except from the silver crests on the blinkers, set off the shapely pair of dark chestnuts, some fifteen hands or a trifle over, whose fire scarcely flagged through the longest day. Perched high you had the sense of having them well in hand, as you were surveying the scenery from a commanding eminence. The natty little coachman-groom who sat behind was an invaluable man-

of-all-work, silently respectful but ready and eager to talk. Next to a Highland drive he enjoyed nothing so much as coming out with the luncheon basket on a shooting day, and then following the guns and marking the birds. He cherished these chestnuts like his children, but his inseparable companion was the black terrier who cantered behind the carriage, when he did not give the order to be picked up. Many times I have driven on that phaeton to the Northern meeting before the Great North of Scotland Railway superseded the Mail and Northern Defiance. Quarters at the inns had to be engaged in advance, for half the North-Eastern gentry were in movement. But as private sitting-rooms were scarce, friends clubbed for the occasion, and those eminently social evenings were half the fun of the outing. One of the regular attendants at the meeting was a well-known county member, whose wit and humour would have kept any party alive and who might almost have held his own with Sheridan or Hook. The worst of him was that he would never give another man a chance of repartee, and when he had let off one rocket he looked round for the laughs, and was deaf to distractions till he sent up the next.

Necessarily there was no Station Hotel in Inverness then : the Caledonian was the general rallying place and there we put up. The social succursale was Morell's branch establishment,

where sherry was in demand all day. Besides the gathering of the clans, there was always a strong muster of the military, for Fort George was held in strength by the Highlanders, and contingents straggled in from other garrisons. At the balls square dances were little in favour : but the reels and the waltzing were kept up till the small hours when it seemed scarcely worth while going to bed. Moreover, much liquor was got through from motives of economy, for none was included in the ball ticket ; when your partner sipped a glass of champagne, a fresh bottle was opened and it had to be emptied to spare the waiters temptation. Sometimes, it used to be said, modern Mohawks would break loose in the quiet streets bent on a frolic, and there was a story of a hearse tossed into the river, when a tramp who had found a shakedown inside had a narrow escape from drowning. More peaceful spirits preferred recuperating for the efforts of next evening with fresh air and carriage exercise. The drag from the Fort would be brought out, the horses hitched in by the drowsy soldier-grooms, and off we would gallop, inhaling the ozone from the seaweed-strewn shores of the estuary, shaking down galantine and pâtés, and getting a voracious appetite for the breakfast when we were received by the sulky solitary on duty.

That phaeton often took us from Aberdeen to the Braemar gathering. No scenery from Tweed

to the Pentland Firth is more exhilarating than that of Deeside. Everything is so bright from the grand stems of the pines in Ballochbuie forest, the silvery shimmer of the 'birks of Abergeldie,' to the scales of the clean-run salmon from the river that is world-famed for 'fish and tree.' On some of the best of the water the fish run late, and salmon remind me of the excellent living at the inns. Ballater and Brig of Potarch are associated with crimped salmon and salmon cutlets, but it was at Aboyne you first came across venison collops. The landlords must have been in collusion with keepers or poachers, for the saddle of black-faced was succeeded by grouse or blackgame, and the repast was wound up with the cranberries, and 'the rich plain cream' was much appreciated by Dr. Redgill, when entertained at the Cleikum by the Nabob.

At Braemar, with its rival inns, there was always a scramble, and you might be grateful if you got anything to eat at all. Both before the gathering were filled to overflowing, foragers were abroad from the adjacent encampments where Farquharsons and Duffs and Strathdon men were bivouacking with their guests. Horses were stalled in extempore stables ; the inn yards were overcrowded with all sorts of conveyances. The unlucky post cattle were worked off their legs, but there was always a pair in reserve for the Queen's messengers. As you lounged in the

doorway of the Invercauld Arms, a chaise from the Spittal of Glenshee would come up the road at a hand gallop. Before the steaming posters had strolled down the yard, another pair was being shoved up against the pole and the messenger was on the way to Balmoral. More likely than not there might be nothing of importance in his bags, but again there might be despatches of the last importance, and to do the Government service simple justice, it invariably made the Kelts look alive. The men of Strathdon were always marched across under command of Sir Charles Forbes, grey-haired and grey-complexioned, who had come back from India to his native hills, to throw himself heart and soul into the part of the patriarchal chieftain. On one memorable occasion, two of his aides-de-camp were Indian heroes—Forbes of Invercruan, now General Sir John, then wearing the laurels of Outram's Persian campaign, and the gigantic Colonel Disney Leith who had lost a hand in scaling the walls of Mooltan.

About that time St. John had published his 'Tour in Switzerland,' and it brought the boat on wheels into fashion. It was warranted not to break down on rough moorland tracks and might be launched on any back-of-the-world sheet of water which had never been navigated by coble or coracle. The only fishing excursion I made in one proved a great disappointment, and came

near to furnish a sensational paragraph for the papers. We jolted to a lonely loch in Inverness-shire over shaggy heather and loose stones, which would have been trying even to a Cape wagon. One of the warranted patent springs gave way and had to be spliced with a piece of rope. We put to sea nevertheless, soaked to mid-thigh in forcing the boat through the sedges. We had been allured by reports of char and big trout lurking in unfathomed depths. But the trolling rods were neglected, and at each cast of the flies the water bubbled with the rush of starving troutlets. It was not good enough, and we decided to put back, when a tornado of wind and rain upset our arrangements. The boat was neither weatherly nor seaworthy. There was nothing for it but to drift before the storm, and we had a very narrow shave of being swamped before we beached her on the opposite shore to that where we had left the horses. It was my sole experience of the amphibious carriage, and I never care to have another.

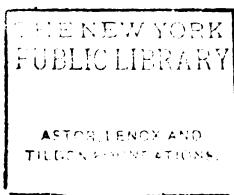
The Irish car is not exactly a luxurious conveyance, but it seems suited to the needs and traditions of the country. There is a happy-go-lucky dash about it, with a devil-may-care fashion of driving. No doubt manners have changed since Jack Hinton of the Guards landed at Kingston, was scrambled for by a rabble of facetious competitors and came a terrible cropper

in a hole which the carman had rushed at a gallop. But still to the uninitiated the car is a perilous vehicle. You cut corners as closely as in a Venetian gondola, and if you relax your grip on the handrail for a moment, it is at the risk of bad bruises or broken bones. Nor is it altogether adapted to a watery climate, and the man must be a maniac who tries to hold up an umbrella against gales from the stormy Atlantic which might shake a Samson on his legs. But there it is—an institution—and you can but make the best of it. For one thing, it puts you on an easy footing with the driver and you generally find him talkative. In Dublin City he may have seduced you by underbidding his rivals, or abating his own terms. Always ready for a bargain in regular Oriental fashion, he may begin by offering to rowl yer Honour through the Phaenix for half a crown, coming down to a shilling, or possibly ninepence. In town or country, with rare exceptions, he is overcharged with the local facts or fictions and any amount of scandalous gossip. Till you know him, you are inclined to set him down as a shameless liar, but on further acquaintance I have come to believe that he accepts much of his wilder romance for gospel. Continual rehearsals have brought conviction and made him perfect in his parts. But the rollicking carman of Lever's novels is an anachronism or a vanished type, and the ready humour is gone, with the abject poverty,

the rags, and the drunkenness. I have driven round Ireland on cars, public and private, from Derry to Cork, from Cork to Wexford, barring an occasional lift on the rail. I never met a carman who attempted a joke, with the solitary exception of the driver of a public conveyance who scattered parcels and newspapers along the road in primitive and promiscuous fashion. He pulled up at the pillars of a lodgeless gate to a gravelled avenue leading for about a mile through dismal bog to a rather handsome cottage ornée. There he dropped a leg of mutton and a sirloin, whistling shrilly and flourishing his whip, while it seemed likely that we were to be delayed indefinitely. ‘Put them on the pillar and lave them : nobody will stale them here,’ suggested a passenger. But our driver took more cynical views of human nature. ‘They won’t stale them if they don’t get the chance, where the gossoons go stalkin’ about like so many hooded crows.’ It is not much of a reminiscence, but it is suggestive of the country of the car. That driver refreshed himself freely en route. As a rule nine out of ten of the fellows who drove me were strict abstainers, who swore by Father Mathew, and it is inconceivable that in the Western drip a man can keep up his spirits if he sticks severely to cold water. Really being in such abstemious company made me shy at taking a pull at my own flask. Yet there are circumstances in which you would be all the better



Alexander Innes Shand.
Age 42.



for a stimulant—even new potheen from one of the mountain stills. I never had a more delightful or more disagreeable drive than from Sligo to Ballina. That was in a four-wheeled car, hored by a unicorn team. There was capital company—cheery priests and a jovial squireen, a farmer or two, and a blue-eyed maiden. I never saw anything to equal the glories of the cloud effects : over the sea, the lustrous white brilliancy was so intense, contrasted as it was with the sombre cloud banks, rolling up like the succession of Atlantic surges in deepest tints of indigo and violet. Between the seats was a closed 'well,' which sheltered a bundle of salmon-rods. The rainstorm swept over us in shrieking gusts : the tarpaulin covering was no sort of protection : long before we reached Ballina there were inches of water gathered in the hold, and in spite of the ulster of thick Irish frieze, for all the world one might as well have been chilling oneself in a filthy bath. It was thirty miles as the crow flies to the precipices of Slieve Liagh on the Bay of Donegal, yet had you been sheltering at the foot of the cliffs you could scarcely have seen them more clearly.

Driving in Brittany in some respects reminded one of Ireland, but of an Ireland of the earlier centuries. There were the same shaggy heaths and barren hills, but the characteristic features came when you plunged into the depths of forests.

The Breton woodlanders were still clad in sheepskins ; though they took their pleasures somewhat lugubriously, there was a subvein of joviality, and the Breton Pardons had much in common with the rollicking holy fairs and pilgrimages of the Green Isle. The Breton patache or cabriolet which you hired for a day's excursion was the most rickety of vehicles which still ran on wheels. There was always a fair chance of breaking down many a league from the nearest forge. The cracked window-panes would neither draw up nor go down ; the leatheren cushions were tattered and mildewed ; the rotten harness was spliced with rope and always subjected to a tremendous strain. One case of a collapse I remember, when we were benighted in the broad woods between the château of Hunaudaye and Dinan. Yet the plucky little mare had done her best, and the savage-looking driver had never struck her, though he vociferated freely, invoked the saints, and commended Jeannette to the care of all the demons. When we abandoned the carriage for the night, in search of the nearest shelter, Jeannette followed docilely at our heels, rubbing her nose confidently against François' shoulder. Those little Breton horses were good beasts and tough as bend-leather : like the Shetlanders and Orkney dwarfs, they had been stunted and toughened by exposure, and they had thriven on rough commons. But my chief fancies on the Continent

were for the ponies of the Ardennes and the Pyrenees. Both are said to spring from a Spanish stock, with a strong infusion of Arab or Moorish blood. Both are full of fire, though well used to semi-starvation. At both Spa and Pau the pony carriage with a pair was the fashion. It was handy for excursions, and eminently congenial to flirtations. At Pau, where the picnic was in great favour, the severest of chaperons made no difficulty about trusting unprotected charges to your coachmanship. It was a continental adaptation of the Canadian muffinship. And when you went forth on a fishing trip with a couple of friends, you hired the little carriage for a few francs a day, and were not hampered with an attendant. The ponies made themselves happy in a draughty stable : slept on a couch of the prickly furze they nibbled, and luxuriated in rations of chopped straw. But they had ways of their own, which they did not care to diverge from. I recollect an ambitious friend, not much of a charioteer, commanding a team of four to take his lady love out for an airing. With a full half-dozen of grooms and helpers, the team was coaxed round into the courtyard of the Hôtel de France. I knew them well : they were all amiable beasts. He gathered up the reins, caught his whiplash in a collar, and forthwith the leaders were crawling up the wall, while the wheelers were looking round as if to ask what the matter

was. All got inextricably entangled and nothing could persuade them to move on. When the leaders were ignominiously sent back to the stable, the wheelers shook their heads complacently to trot off with the usual blend of sedateness and spirit, while the discomfited coachman carried off the situation with philosophic calm. Of more solid build and somewhat better fed were the black ponies of the Ardennes. There was an old fellow at the 'Britannique' to whom I took a special fancy : he was equally good in the saddle or between the shafts. We struck up a close friendship, and many a time he took me out with gun or fishing-rod. You could always turn him loose to graze, and he never wandered far. I was deterred from buying him, partly from his age, but chiefly because the landlord liked him as much as I did and put on a prohibitory price.

By the way, talking of fishing trips, I recall a roving expedition from Pesth with an Hungarian magnate who was a great horse-breeder and had been a member of our four-in-hand club. He coached a team of half-broken young ones, pretty nearly thoroughbred, who had had scarcely more training for harness than Mr. Sawyer's Marathon, who had been twice walked round the field at Market Harborough in a set of light harness. The longest stage took little out of them, and it was hard to pull them up at the barriers of Pesth where there were heavy octroi duties levied on

tobacco. ‘Anything to declare, Herr Graf?’ queried the Customs officer, while the horses were dancing on their hind legs to his infinite terror. ‘Hundert pfund tabac,’ was the prompt reply, when the official laughed and signed to go on. And there was more than a hundred pounds of cigars and Latakia at that moment under the Count’s legs in the boot.



CHAPTER VI

OLD WATERWAYS

LIKE the woodcocks I used to take my first flights across the Channel in the dark, and for various reasons. In the first place the passage by day was tedious at the best, and I could sleep tolerably through any ordinary weather. There were drawbacks no doubt to be taken into count when the rolling pitched you off the slippery sofa on to the uncompromising oilcloth of the floor. But we had to reckon the good against the evil, and on the whole the balance preponderated. In those primitive days there was an ugly rush for the only day boat at the eleventh hour, and it was well to take time by the forelock. Most people preferred to travel by day. The steamers on the day service were far the more roomy, more powerful, and better appointed. Then the land travel on the English side was a serious business, with the chance of adventure and the certainty of squabbles with cabmen, from the start in West London to the embarkation on the coast. The South-Eastern had left the Bricklayers' Arms but had come no further than London Bridge. The trains were slow : the stoppages were lengthy, and it

need not be said there were no arrangements to shoot out the passengers alongside of the boats. Even when the weather was favourable family parties and unprotected females had a rough time of it, in scrambling for the ship with the help of predatory porters, while keeping their eyes on the multiplicity of light packages. The weakest went to the wall, yet it was everything to be first in the race ; there were no deck cabins to be secured in advance, and advantageous positions under the gangway and elsewhere in which to be sick in relative comfort were at a premium. The horrors in one of those overcrowded boats in summer after a breezy middle passage can only be hinted. So with a man at a loose end, to whom time was little object, by taking a later train for the night boat, all that was avoided. It is true you might have troubles of your own, but you were committed to nothing. At any rate you made sure of a leisurely dinner, and could meditate further movements over coffee and a cigar. Like other travellers you had rather anxiously read the signs of the weather in the drift of the smoke from the chimneys and the streaming of the flags in the harbour, but what always scared me were leaden clouds and the watery breath of a south-westerly wind. When I first knew Dover the Ship, in the centre of the sweep of houses and quay embracing the harbour, was still to the fore and still fashionable, though

Birmingham, the proprietor, moving with the times, had built himself a magnificent rival in his Lord Warden. It was in the Ship, in Theodore Hook's novel of 'Jack Brag,' that Jack finally gave himself away to his patron Lord Tom, whose eyes were at last opened to his absurdities. It was from the Ship I took my first departure for Paris. I had never been in Paris and was eager to get there. Everything was ominously calm that night and not a drop of rain had fallen. In spite of Birmingham's friendly warnings, a fly was ordered round from the yard. Half-way to the harbour the storm broke with a deafening crash of thunder, the rain came down in torrents and flooded the fly through the window sashes. Too proud to go back, turned out at the pier end, before we had sprinted over the short distance to the little paddle-boat we might as well have struggled ashore after swimming the Channel. That was an exceptionally bad case, but you often had to brace yourself to face similar disagreeables in a mitigated form. Handy as the Lord Warden was to the pier, unless you could have chartered a sedan chair, in rough and watery weather there was no hope of getting on board dry. The rattle of the great panes in the dining-room, dimmed and encrusted with salt water, was a warning of what you might expect. Be it remembered there were no good wraps then : neither the frieze ulster nor the thick railway

rug had been invented, though the poncho which had a passing vogue was giving place to the flimsy Inverness cape. The stoutest umbrella was turned outside in as the rain streamed down the neck of tight-fitting Petersham or Chesterfield : the mackintosh was pasted to your soaking legs like so much gold-beater's leaf.

If embarking might be a nuisance and even a misery, disembarkation was worse, for in free England at least you were unfettered by the formalities which welcomed you on the French side, and on the whole were fairly independent of the flow or fall of the tide. The Calais and Boulogne of to-day, with their imposing railway stations and spacious wharves, have been absolutely transformed. Then after negotiating the narrow entrance and navigating the winding channel between barnacle-covered piles festooned with sea wrack, the victims of the mal de mer might have to scale a slippery gangway at an angle approaching the perpendicular. Beset by vociferous touts, with sullen gendarmerie for masters of the ceremonies, you were marshalled between the ropes that kept off the gaping crowd to face the ordeal of the passport bureau and the custom house. That ordeal passed, you were tumbled into omnibuses and driven off to the train, where in cramped coaches crowded to their utmost capacity the seats had again to be fought for. Then there were no coupés to be secured by

extra payment and tipping, and at Calais especially the primitive refreshment arrangements gave but an indifferent idea of the French cuisine.

But it was at Calais that the Company of the Chemin de Fer du Nord took the first step in the way of reform. There was a time when the certainty of comfortable and convenient night quarters there tempted me to take to the day boats. Four capital bedrooms had been built over the refreshment-rooms at the station, upholstered from Paris with couch and writing table : the cooking left nothing to desire, and some of the specialities in second-class vintages were undeniable. Now, as then, I always associate Calais buffet with Grâve, which would be cheap if the price were tripled. You slept well, breakfasted luxuriously à la Française, and secured one of the best seats in the train before the advent of your flurried countryfolk. The sole difficulty was the passing of the evening, and there Boulogne had decidedly the advantage, for you could fall back upon the cosmopolitan Hôtel des Bains : though the Bains before the abolition of arrest for debt was somewhat perilous quarters for the unsophisticated youth of social proclivities. Calais is historically associated with the sojourn of Beau Brummell, the most highflying of debtors, hopelessly over head and ears, who solaced himself in his exile with collecting all manner of costly knicknacks, while unblushingly levying tribute

on the friends of his prosperity. Boulogne with its plurality of cheap hotels and boarding-houses was frequented by impecunious hordes of an humbler pitch but at least as rapacious and far less scrupulous. There were birds of prey who made the hotels their hunting ground, whose swagger and semblance of gentility were their stock in trade, for there was always the chance of some pigeon to pluck. And even then Boulogne was already patronised by the cheap tripper. When I spent a pleasant summer as a boy at Ramsgate, I remember how I used to watch from a balcony in Wellington Crescent a steamer—the 'Black Beetle' was her sobriquet, but I forgot her real name—painfully crawling across, deep laden with Cockney excursionists. Calais offered no similar attractions. If Rosherville used to advertise itself then as the place to spend a happy day, Calais might have backed itself at long odds as exceptionally eligible for a dull one. Yet there were youths in easy circumstances and primarily addicted to pleasure who used habitually to go in for the Calais-Dover crossing from sheer delight in adventure and danger. I spent a fortnight on the Dover heights shortly before the Crimean War, as an honorary member of the mess of the old 42nd. Among the gallant subalterns of the Black Watch were some of her Majesty's hardest bargains, though if they betook themselves to larking in peace they were always

spoiling for war. The sight of the French cliffs irresistibly tempted to excursions strictly forbidden, and they trained for campaigning in a fashion of their own. They would saunter down carelessly to the harbour when the Calais boat was casting off, keeping a sharp look-out for colonel or adjutant. A rush into the crowd and they dived below, not to emerge till they had passed the pierhead. And all they got for the return ticket was the chance of a rough and tumble on the waves, the certainty of a scrambling and unsatisfactory lunch, and the possibility of being befogged on the homeward voyage with all the awkward consequences of absence without leave, in aggravating circumstances.

Newhaven of a dull autumn evening when the tide was out, with the screaming seagulls sweeping over the shelving mud, was as dreary a scene as could well be imagined. Nor was the forlorn railway hotel at the end of the long pier calculated to raise the drooping spirits. Naturally a young man's fancy turned to a stiff caulk of brandy-and-water hot by way of tonic and appetiser. Yet I have pleasant recollections of the old place, of the walk across the swing bridge and the bright ascent to the western heights by way of pre-prandial breather—many a pleasing dream of prospective pleasure I have had there when I anticipated next morning's tidal train. Though the hotel was rather lonely and forbidding,

appearances were deceptive. As a rule you had it to yourself, but there was always abundance in the larder, for it was largely patronised on the arrival of the boats. It was a foretaste of fair France and no bad one. If you interviewed the French chef, he zealously devoted himself to your entertainment. The management did not pride itself on the refinements of the cellar, but there was unexceptionable Macon and Pommard. Conversible foreign waiters were practising their broken English on you, though I cannot say that was an additional attraction. Then next day, if the morning had broken brightly, with the golden ripple of the flowing sea, and the sunshine reflected from the brown sails of the fishing boats, you wondered how Newhaven of the dusk could ever have seemed dismal. Everything was then run economically. The hotel bill, the chef's efforts included, was a marvel of moderation. As for the fare, they took you from London to Paris for twenty-eight shillings, in itself no small inducement. When you were looking forward to a costly round of Parisian restaurants and theatres, it was no slight ease to the conscience to feel that you had had such a frugal send-off. I fancied the Dieppe route for many reasons. In place of the bare wheat lands of Picardy you travelled through the rich orchards and gardens of Normandy—when you came home the steamer was fragrant with the hampers of apples and plums—and you

landed in Paris at the back of the Madeleine, within pulse-beat of the heart of fashionable Paris. Then these boats were crowded with lively French folk, who, whether well or ill, in storm or in calm, were infinitely more amusing than English of the same class. The low fares attracted the frugal Frenchman, and it was the natural route to the industrial cities on the Seine as well as to bourgeois Paris. It was cheap in more senses than one, for the company gave you a deal of sea for your money. The normal time of crossing was about eight hours, though that might often have been materially shortened with favourable tides on either side. But to anticipate grumbling and letters to the 'Times' the company ordained that the most tedious passage should be the measure of the minimum in their time-tables.

If my memories of the Dieppe route are cheery, those of the Dover-Ostend passage are much the reverse. The steamers, especially the night boats, were far from commodious, and the North Sea is unkindly with its easterly gales. I rather think the fleet flew the Belgian flag, but that can hardly have been the reason of their so often breaking down, and certainly not of their being so frequently befogged. With heavy seas racing for the narrows of Dover, they rolled and pitched in portentous fashion. Often I have held out hard on deck, in an oilskin borrowed from a sailor, till piercing

winds played the mischief with the diaphragm, and surges of green water compelled me to go below. You dived with extreme reluctance for you knew what you had to expect. There was sure to be conviviality going forward in what resembled the cockpit of a man-of-war. Prostrate figures, male and female, were groaning in misery, while iron-lined Flemings or Dutchmen were holding high revelry. All my associations with the evil-smelling cabins of those cramped boats are of bottled stout and brandies and sodas. I see the long table now, garnished with pickle jars, flanking the invariable pallid ham and the underdone ribs of beef. One occasion I specially remember, when we had a vulgarised down-to-date revival of Van der Helst's Congress of Münster. A group of burgomasters from Ghent or Bruges were crossing to London on some civic business. Round the neck of the portly senior was the golden chain of office. Apparently they had gone in for training for heavy dining at the Mansion House : they had made a sweep of the beef, the ham and the pickles, and now after settling to sliced sausage and Dutch cheese, they were passing from solids to the stronger fluids. One of them in a hoarse bass chanted patriotic melodies, and the rest of the inharmonious guild joined in the chorus. Far above listening to the humble remonstrances of the steward, they lit up long pipes, or smoked their rancid home-made

cigars. To make matters worse we ran into a dense fog and drifted aimlessly off the mouth of the Thames towards the Mouse Light and the West Swin—something, as usual, had gone wrong with the machinery—till happily we hit off at Gravesend and were landed, when the atmosphere of the cabin had become asphyxiating. Such a respectable pandemonium I have seldom been in, indeed I only remember one similar experience, and that was in a Channel packet, bound from Southampton to St. Malo. A scientific party of wandering medical students had taken possession of the after cabin, with nothing of the sense of dignity of the grave and potent signiors of the Low Countries. Regardless of the presence of ladies, they stripped coat and vest, rousing the night owl or the sea-swallow with wild whoops and catches, and keeping it up from the witching hour, till long past daybreak, when they called for hot coffee and eggs and bacon. Fortunately they were good-humoured in their cups, and the ladies were quit for a sleepless night. Even the sturdy skipper owned that he dared not tackle them. ‘They’re a rough lot, but they might be worse, and there’s little to be got by meddling with them.’ Then he abruptly changed the subject.

I saw a good deal of Southampton in old days, when ‘Radley’s’ was one of my familiar houses of call, for the South-Western Hotel with its

interminable corridors and the engines continually shrieking under the windows had not been thought of. The Southampton and Havre route to France was a pleasant alternative to that by Newhaven and Dieppe. Of course, as they ran in rivalry, the charges were the same. And as the Havre boat started at midnight, the advantage was that you could have a late dinner leisurely at a club, having eased your mind by booking a berth beforehand. There were no regular railway connections at Havre, which was a matter of indifference, as there were always sights to see in the cosmopolitan harbour, and strange manners to observe in the great glass saloon at Frascati's, where French and English cockneys met in the season on neutral ground. I have never had a passion for yachting, but I have done some yachting from Southampton. It was in the sort of craft I most affect : a well-found steamer of many thousand tons burden. After the opening of the Suez Canal, when they sank from light and precious freights of silk to holds full of vulgar cotton, the P. & O. were renewing their fleet, changing paddles—worse luck—for screws, and fitting them with the compound engines which made the Canal a financial triumph. I had sundry friends among the directors, and they were good enough to ask me often to the trial trips. The guests were agreeably mixed, the hospitality was lavish, and generous

consideration was shown to the susceptibilities of the weakest. If there was much of a sea on, the trip was confined to the smooth channel of the Solent ; in halcyon calms we rounded the Isle of Wight. Talking of that hospitality, I remember how on the first of my visits I put my foot in it. Leaving London early, fasting from all except a cup of coffee, I was ravenous when I set foot on the ship. Seeing no preparations for breakfast, I hinted to my friend that I was famishing. I have never forgiven him for having my wants supplied without a word of warning. I had scarcely finished a most satisfactory meal when the tables were spread again, as by magic, with all the accompaniments of a magnificent banquet, and though I took my seat with the rest I was hopelessly out of the running. By the way, I had more than one experience of the sort when the new line was started from Queenborough to Flushing. At first, leaving Cologne about noon and embarking late, if you had not laid in supplies at the Nord, you stuffed yourself with all that was most indigestible to be found in the Dutch restaurants, for there was little to expect in the boat. One evening on descending to the cabin where vouchers were checked and berths allotted I had a shock. The supper table was laid out à la Russe with plate and crystal, and artistically decorated with flowers from the Middelburg and Flushing gardens. Again, there

was another disagreeable surprise, when they suddenly sprang a restaurant car on unwary passengers, who, leaving Cologne later by an accelerated express, had made sure of a dinner before starting. It was no light thing to lose the chance of breaking that most uninteresting of journeys so agreeably.

The trekshuyt of the Low Countries was before my time, though I have heard old stagers dilate on the delights of the leisurely mode of travel and the luxury of the commissariat. But in early boyhood I had my experiences of canal navigation, when Scotland had scarcely been touched by the railways. Coaches were still running regularly on the northern and southern roads, and the Edinburgh and Glasgow Canal was in full activity when the Edinburgh and Glasgow railway was in course of construction or completed. When I first was sent from Edinburgh to school in Stirlingshire, I used to be forwarded by canal. The school, by the way, was in the quaint old mansion of Polemont, whence about a baker's dozen of us soon migrated with the Rev. Mr. Cunningham to Blair Lodge, to become the nucleus of that flourishing academy. At Blair Lodge, though well treated on the whole, I temporarily lost my taste for mutton, for we used to buy sheep by the hundred and eat through them from the heads to the trotters. As for the canal boat, my memories are of scarcity rather than

satiety—it seemed hardly worth while to victual a boy for so short a voyage, and no provisions were to be had on board. By a flight of fancy the 'Swallow' was advertised as flying through a succession of romantic scenes. The scenery was romantic enough and rich in historical interest: 'the pity was that you saw so little of it.' The level of the canal lies low; the low-roofed cabin was run on the lines of the gondola, evidently devised for Venetian love-making by moonlight, screened from the gaze of the curious public. But there was little love made or lost in the cabin of the 'Swallow,' where one was tightly wedged among substantial farmers, and their portly wives nursing babies or baskets, and where a small boy was summarily suppressed. The flight of the 'Swallow' in full swing was measured by the ambling trot of a couple of screws, harnessed tandem-fashion. The wheeler—but there were no wheels—was ridden by a featherweight, who would jump off at times to stretch his legs and encourage his horses by giving them a licking and a lead. The 'swift' boats were soon distanced by the trains, when the canal was given over to goods traffic. I had a good deal to say to the barges and the tow-ropes later, when as a member of the St. Andrews Boat Club I came many a cropper when sculling home in the dark, or the moonlight from our dining-room at Hermiston, where we held con-

vivial meetings in the summer evenings. Hermiston had been the first relay of the flying boats ; we rented the premises, did our cooking in the old stable, and dined or supped and held harmonious smoking concerts in what had of old time been the passengers' waiting-room.

William Howitt in his 'Visits to Remarkable Places' had expatiated on the hosts of Southern pilgrims Scott had attracted to the North. Had he foreseen the developments of the future, the rivalries of competing railways, and the swarms of cheap trippers, he would have pitched his pæan of progress in a higher key. Fifty years ago the rush was still to be gauged by the number of wheels and horses, and the lake navigation was conducted in the most primitive fashion. There were fair boats on the larger lakes, but they set time at defiance, never wasted fuel, and gave you ample time to admire the glories of the mountain giants that overshadowed them—Ben Lomond, Ben Cruachan, Ben Lawers. Loch Katrine, though the most magnetic of all, was served according to its size. One sultry summer evening I strolled down from the Trossachs Hotel to where the tiny 'Lady of the Lake' was tethered to a wooden jetty. She was a trifle more commodious than a modern steam launch, and I got into conversation with her crew. They consisted of the skipper, the engineer, and the boy who stoked, and they were all smoking for dear

life in a darkness of midges. But if the lake steamers were few and poorly fitted, that was the golden age of the cranky ferry boats. In Western Scotland many an arm of the sea stretched across your shortest road, only to be circumvented by a long day's travel. You were at the mercy of the ferrymen, and might have to signal to them on the other side. In a Highland downpour you had to practise patience and had trying experiences of the Keltic slowness. The boat had been frequently patched, but never thoroughly repaired. The rowers, when they did launch out, rather lay than stretched to the oars, and sometimes their Highland phlegm or pluck was apt to aggravate the Lowlander. For in those narrowing bottle-necks between hill and sands when the tide from the sea met the gusts from the mountains there was apt to be an angry turmoil, and with the water oozing through leaking planks you were reminded of the fate of Lord Ullin's daughter. If you were travelling with a carriage, the troubles and risks were increased. Then you committed yourself to a flat-bottomed barge, something like a Virginian scow, and the horses were awkward travelling companions. The Highland ponies faced the water quietly enough, but the Lowlanders took to rearing, slipping down, and half strangling themselves : once I remember—I think it was on Loch Etive—in vivid lightning flashes and deafening

thunder peals a horse broke his halter, leaping clean overboard, and nearly bringing all his company to shipwreck.

If the steamers on the lakes were slow or small, it was different with those on the Clyde. The river had no rival in the rail, and from murky morning to smoke-clouded eve the Broomielaw was a bustling scene. Already the romantic shores down to Largs and Rothesay had been besprinkled with rising health resorts. I have recollections of the river before it was dredged and embanked. I believe we used to go steady as far as Govan, and then let ourselves go. Of course in those days you soon emerged from the city gloom into the clear air of the country. There was only occasional hammering from shipyards. And what glorious views you have on the Clyde when some loch or glen opens a vista into the mountains! The voyage through the land-locked Kyles of Bute was delightful, but it might be a serious piece of business rounding the Mull of Kintyre—the Moil as they call it and the Horn of those seas. The company was generally as obstreperous as the cargo, and coming from the north the boats were always overladen with bellowing cattle and complaining sheep. It was pretty sure to be blowing half a gale, with sleet or rain according to the season, so the cabin was invariably overcrowded. There were lairds from remote lochs and isles, and their sheep-farming

tenants in damp and shaggy overcoats, which they did not care to remove though the cabin atmosphere was stifling. Some of their collies had crept in and curled up under the table. These shaggy Kelts had the constitutions of the burgomasters I have just mentioned ; and if they did feel any qualms, they considered toddy the grand specific. Tallisker and Long John, both from Argyleshire distilleries, were their favourite brands. The bulk of the society seldom thought of turning in, which was just as well, as the accommodation was inadequate and the berths cramped. In such circumstances you have generally the certain hope of a speedy release. That was by no means always the case in that western voyage if you were bound for one of the smaller islands. The steamer stood in towards the pierless bay, saw the Atlantic surges breaking on the shore and pronounced disembarkation impossible. So you were carried on indefinitely into the howling waste of waters. Perhaps it was almost worse when you were waiting to be taken off from some sporting Patmos. You had been expecting anxiously for hours in a miserable Highland change-house ; the boatmen had been desponding, but you still hoped the best ; when the longed-for steamer rounded the point, made a waft of decided negation, and left you lamenting to try your luck again.

Before the railways, there was a lively and lucrative passenger traffic between Granton—the Duke of Buccleuch's new harbour—and the ports of the North. As a schoolboy I used to be roused in the smallest of the small hours to drive down to Granton in a 'minibus' to take passage in the 'Duchess of Sutherland' or 'The Queen.' The fares were low, but once I remember being put in charge of a young doctor, who was going north with one or two of his cronies. For 'a ploy,' as he called it, but doubtless from economy, they had taken tickets for the steerage, which was literally a deck passage. The steerage was swept by the green surges, and the doctor had an attack of pneumonia from which he never recovered. But he could not have afforded to travel by coach. Whatever the weather, you had a toss in St. Andrews Bay, which was the Biscay of the East, as the Moil was the Horn of the West. And if Aberdeen was your destination it was always ticklish of approach, with an extremely dangerous bar. Sometimes you lay pitching off it for an hour or two; the 'Duchess of Sutherland' came to grief on the sands within gunshot of the pier. There had been another memorable shipwreck mentioned by Scott on his northern cruise, which I have special reason for remembering. We were burying a great aunt of mine in the family vault in a lonely churchyard overlooking the Don. The sides of the vault

were supported by massive beams, and I am told they were the timbers of the ill-fated 'Oscar,' the whaler which, as Scott says, had been lost with all hands at the back of the Girdleness, now guarded by a far-flashing lighthouse.

The waterways of Holland had a charm of their own, when you were not pressed for time and travelled to study human nature. My favourite means of conveyance to the Low Countries was the old 'Baron Osy,' which sailed every Wednesday from the Tower for Antwerp. There was generally a festive party forward, smoking, singing, and drinking bottled stout, but their exuberance calmed down as we got out of the river. The start was discreetly arranged so that dinner should be served when we had passed Gravesend, and when we met an angry swell the absentees were many. We took it easily while steaming up the winding Scheldt, with the steeple of Antwerp cathedral on all quarters in rapid succession, but one was getting into training for leisurely Dutch voyages. From Antwerp to Rotterdam by water was far more picturesque than by rail, and the memories of historical interest were endless where the Spaniards were fighting the amphibious Hollanders. But it was slow at best, especially against the strong tides from the north, and you took your chances. The channel, only navigable in fog by an experienced pilot, twisted about among the sandy

islands and mudbanks, and was marked out by branches stuck on the shoals. Once we had the ill-luck to get aground on one of those mudbanks ; backing the engines was of no use, and we could only wait for the tide to float us off. The stoical apathy of the skipper would have inspired the feeblest with confidence : he lit his pipe, smoked tranquilly, and waited. Nor had the passengers much reason to complain of the delay, for I have seldom met with a more generous commissariat. So there was no lack of creature comforts on the North Holland Canal, though the boats were necessarily small and chiefly patronised by the peasantry. There the stoppages were due to ships facing a head wind, which blew them athwart the narrow channel. For the ninety long miles from Amsterdam to the Helder you steered through a genuine Dutch panorama of queer-rigged craft of fantastic build, of windmills, steeples, red-brick villages, and now and again mouldering market towns with round cheeses piled like cannon-shot under the sheds. There was a perpetual coming and going of the stolid boers and their wives, and forward, veiled in clouds of tobacco smoke, the deck was piled half-mast high with hampers of their dairy and garden produce. It was a trip worth taking once in a lifetime. So it was, but rather more so, with the Rhine voyage from Rotterdam to Cologne. On the North Holland Canal you had

occasional glimpses of the country and the cattle : on the Rhine for two mortal days you stared into sloping banks, the bulwarks of the low pasture lands against the spring floods. The passage was leisurely, but the fares were low and so the boats were popular. When I took a ticket on one occasion for reasons of my own, I found that the berths and sofas had been pre-engaged. It did not so much signify, and the only consequence was that when we tied up for the night at Emmerich, the frontier Prussian fortress, I had to go ashore and find a bed in the comfortable hotel. At Emmerich we laid in fresh supplies of cutlets, eggs, and milk, for meals and tobacco—as invariably in Holland—were our great resource. The second day it rained incessantly, and though there was a glass shelter on the quarter deck, there was nothing to be seen but mist and drizzle, with the occasional swing of a windmill arm on the near horizon.

But it was almost worth going through that interminable day of drip to be landed in the life of Cologne. Sitting at dinner in a window of the Hôtel de Hollande, you looked down on a lively and busy scene. The railways had not then desecrated the shores of the exulting and abounding river, and all the traffic was carried on the Rhine and all the bustle was on the river-front. The rush of feet, the measured tread of pickets marching across from the barracks at

Deutz, sent their echoes from the Rhine bridge, where the tollman was gathering a rich harvest of fractions of groschen. The bridge was constantly lifting to give passage to floatage of all kinds, from barges in tow of tugs to timber-rafts from the Black Forest. Nor did the scene or the sounds lose in picturesqueness as the dark came down. Flashing lights were flitting about everywhere, or twinkling like fixed stars, lining the bridge, the banks, and the terraced beer-gardens before the hotels over the way. Steamers preparing for a night start were snorting like so many hippopotami or shrieking like souls in pain. I was once tempted to try a night voyage myself. It was on a cargo boat which did not profess to lay itself out for passengers, though they made you comfortable enough. There was a novelty in seeing the familiar scenery by moonlight which seduced me into lingering on deck till late ; then turning in on a sofa I had myself called in time to see the morning sun rise red behind the rock of Ehrenbreitstein. I had taken my ticket for Mayence, but had enough of it at St. Goar, for we had shipped some horses for the Duke of Nassau's stables at Biebrich, and a stallion, who took to plunging and screaming, threw the rest into dire confusion. But in those days of steamers with small horse-power an idler's trip up the Rhine was always synonymous with dawdling. Engineering science had not tackled the ob-

structions. They had not blasted the rocks of the Lurlei where an old gentleman still woke the echoes with his horn, nor had they cleared the channel of the Bingerloch where many a craft and raft came to grief. Country innkeepers and stewards must alike lament the advent of expresses running under the castled banks. In the olden time, from every village with a castle to show, a boat might put forth with British tourists, dexterously catching the rope that hitched it on behind the paddle-box. On forlorn little piers you saw the Eilwagen, caked with dust, the postillion in faded blue and yellow, with his feathered hat and his horn, waiting to take any chance traveller to some Heaven-abandoned townlet in the wilds. The river was the main artery, and there you were sure to meet any acquaintances bound for the Baths or for Northern Germany. The stewards made the most of the short season and had as good as time as the innkeepers. They sold panoramas and illustrated riverine guide-books at fancy prices. But their great opportunity was in the confusion of debased and half-obliterated coinage, for you zigzagged between thalers and groschen and florins and kreutzers. Often some helpless victim would hold out his hand and humbly ask the extortioner to help himself.

The chief patrons of the Rhine boats were English tourists : there were few Americans, and not many natives travelling for pleasure. It was

very different on the steamers on the Upper Elbe, where English travellers were comparatively rare. But the Saxons revelled in the beauties of their own romantic river, and the time to be initiated into Saxon al fresco life was in the sweltering heat of the dog days or at Whitsun-side. In Whitsun week all Dresden went out holiday-making. The boats were crowded with family parties, with students smoking china pipes and trolling out patriotic choruses, and with spectacled savants bound on botanising expeditions behind the Prebisch Thor and slinging botanical cases ballasted with dinner. Going up stream you had ample time to admire the miniature grandeurs of the Saxon Switzerland, but en revanche you came down with a rush, and it needed skilful navigation to effect the stoppages safely. On the Upper Danube the pace was swifter still, and as wood was cheap there, the skippers seemed to be reckless. They slackened speed on the rapid current, came round with a sharp swing and then steamed up full power to cast the ropes on to the jetty. As often as not there was a rending of wood and crashing of paddle-wheels, but it was all in the day's work. I remember when I saw the Danube at Donauwerth, I admired the ease with which some small boys swam the swift and shallow stream, although landing far down on the opposite bank, but be-thought myself that a steamer to negotiate it

OLD WATERWAYS

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trified, policed, and Christianised, so atrocity are now out of the question bank was Turkish from the Servian towards, and Silistria was associate gallant Englishmen who had throw into the direction of the memora The Principality owned the suzera Porte; there were hospodars in W waywodes in Moldavia, but at the united provinces were under the rul Couza. After his retirement I have through a season at Baden, facing fortune at the tables with equal cou had gone to play during his term of opinion would not have been scandalis boyars were inveterate gamblers, and squeezed their peasants at home, than try their luck in Germany. Indeed the morals of Bucharest were not and the managers of hotels toler exceeding by some degrees the easy a of those in Vienna. So what with travellers and the briskness of the riv there was no lack of variety in the e crowd. There were Jews, Turks, h infidels. There was a wealthy Vienn bent on a good bargain with the] was a little French trader with his who had gone to Paris to lay in a st goods for his shop in Pera. There w

from Pesth in admirably fitting morning suits which had evidently been ordered from Bond Street or Savile Row. They had their horses forward, English thoroughbreds, in charge of grooms in the local khaki costume, a colour which had been borrowed from their sands or their sun-baked clay. There were Russians returning home, and, like the Wallachian boyars, though the weather was turning to genial spring, they still wrapped themselves after sundown in pelisses of costly fur. We shipped a bey at Belgrade, and he brought a sample of his harem with him, but they were jealously secluded on the deck for three mortal days behind a square yard or two of canvas screen. Above all, we had a third-rate operatic company on their way to Constantinople : the looks of the ladies were more pleasing than their voices, but as some of the enamoured boyars came down munificently, they had no reason to complain of lack of appreciation at the al fresco concerts they gave of an evening.

I came to the conclusion that spring was the season to see the Danube. For the rest of the year from Bazsach to Orsova there would be nothing but tameness and arid monotony. In May we were threading archipelagos of verdant islands, floating or half submerged in a boundless expanse of sea, with here and there what might be a hovel or a haystack. On the waste of waters the reflected sunsets were superb. At

Orsova the scenery was striking in a modest way, although its grandeur had been absurdly exaggerated. Then there had been no blasting of the rocks in the channel, and in May we slipped over them easily enough. But late in the summer when the river was low, navigating the larger steamers became ticklish work, till at last the Direction took warning from damaged keels and the passengers had to transship into 200-ton cockboats. Galatz and Braila were then doing a great business in grain : I fancy they had far more prosperous times before they had to compete with the wheat-fields of Western America. There were two smart armed craft moored among the corn-ships, and I took them for the promising young Wallachian navy till I saw they flew British colours. Then, as a stranger in a far-away land, I took a boat and sent up my card. It was the sort of obtrusive thing James Boswell would have done naturally, but it turned out well, for I found an old acquaintance, had a pleasant evening, and arranged for some subsequent shooting in the Dobrudscha.

The Danube steamer was roomy and rather luxurious : I cannot say as much for the Russian coaster which took me from Kustenji to the Bosphorus. She had neither freight nor ballast enough, and she rolled abominably on a moderate swell. The Black Sea is restless as the still-vexed Bermoothes. Except for the caviare and

smoked salmon, the food was filthy, and the only liquors were black beer and fiery vodka. When a light breeze freshened into a gale we were in an inferno and in some slight danger as well, for when the skipper should have been looking after his ship, he was on his knees before the ikon in his cabin. However, we made Varna all right, when the chalk marks were still on the barn doors where our steeds had been stalled or our soldiers billeted. I had had enough of the coasting tramp when landed at Stamboul. It was delightful shooting about in the buoyant caïques which Disraeli would have called the hansoms of the Bosphorus, and there was exhilarating novelty in the very mixed company on the bateaux mouches which plied between Galata and the Legation at Therapia. Needless to say that, fresh from that Black Sea voyage, I resisted the seductive proposal of a friend to charter a Greek bark for a rambling cruise to Athens through the isles of the Archipelago—the Arches, as the trading captains called it—I remembered Kinglake's comment on his experiences—that he used to think Ulysses took his time about getting back to Ithaca, but now he firmly believed he had made a fair average passage. Indeed I saw something of modern "Hellenic" maritime methods when I embarked on a Greek boat at the Isthmus of Corinth for Corfu. We zigzagged down the gulf, and that I expected and intended, but I was

not prepared for the intolerable delays at the little ports. The sun was blazing hot : there was no awning : the tar was exuding from the seams of the deck : the cabin swarmed with bugs and cockroaches : the rats had the free run of the ship : the brown water in the carafes was luke-warm, and the tepid wine was impregnated with resin. For once in my later life I robbed an orchard. At Patmos in a respectable café I had saturated myself with iced lemonade, but I could not carry any of that away. Then taking a stroll before going on board, I happened to pluck something between a succulent plum and a sour apple from a bough hanging over a footpath. Here was the very thing for a sea-store in a thirsty ship, so I filled a fair-sized handkerchief and walked off with my plunder. It did not last long, that was the worst of it, and by the time we touched at Zante I was raging again. I made a rush for a British sergeant on the pier and begged him to take me to the nearest public. Then I appreciated the page in '*Vanity Fair*,' where Thackeray dilates on the first draught of the foaming tankard to the Indian exile returned to his fatherland. There was a convenient service of the Austrian Lloyds from Corfu to Trieste. I had passed a pleasant fortnight with the garrison at Cephalonia, where among the guests at mess there were always sundry officers from the ships in the harbour. There were some

naval and military men going home on leave, and we made up a party.

Those coasting Austrian Lloyds gave you admirable flying glimpses of the Adriatic shores. You steamed leisurely all day and came to moorings through the night in some land-locked port, discharging a miscellaneous cargo. The braying of the donkey-engine and the hoisting cases out of the hold were nuisances, but it had to be endured. By day you luxuriated in the golden sunshine and revelled in the glorious scenery. She was a capacious ship, and, with the exception of a genial Italian priest who spoke English with great inaccuracy, our only fellow passenger aft was a consumptive Viennese banker who kept his cabin and coughed all night. Our fraternising with the friendly cleric led to rather an absurd incident. Taking leave, after we dropped the anchor at Ancona, he advised us to go and see the old episcopal palace, saying that the venerable prelate loved the English and was always glad to welcome them. We went to the palace, but, needless to say, we did not ask an audience of the prelate. However, after being shown over a suite of salons, our cicerone told us in hushed breath that we should be privileged to see the private apartments. There we were welcomed by a dignified major domo with a golden chain of office. We entreated him civilly of course, but not reverentially. A lately joined Irish

ensign, a devout Catholic, mistook the man for the master, and scandalised at the indecorum of the heretics, pluckily dropped on his knees and humbly implored a blessing.

That Adriatic steamer evidently did not expect many cabin passengers and certainly did not provide for them. Forward, the deck crowd was as picturesque, if not quite so varied, as that on the Danube boat. There were Greeks, Montenegrins, and Albanians in snowy camese and shaggy capote, walking arsenals of antiquated firearms, but carrying steel that had both point and edge. If racial differences had broken out there might have been an ugly row, but though the groups kept their distances suspiciously, they preserved a benevolent neutrality. They were expected to bring their own supplies ; if these ran short they had only themselves to blame. We in the cabin who were at the mercy of the purser were in worse case, and the scanty table was actually starved before we came to moorings at Trieste. One had never any complaint of that kind to make with regard to the rival P. and O. on the Mediterranean. I used to calculate the cost of a passage on these and on the Messageries at about 3*l.* a day, but both catered liberally for different tastes and constitutions. The table of the English company was lavishly solid to satiety.

Yet I liked the generous old fashion, when you] certainly paid a sufficient fare, but there

was no more stinting in the drink than in the edibles. At meals the long tables were sparkling with alternate decanters of sherry and claret. On deck from long before the hour of noon there was a continual popping of soda-water and bitter beer corks. But the menu from the thick ox tail or mock turtle through British entrées and solid saddles or sirloins to heavy puddings was eminently unsuited to warm latitudes. Yet they knew and considered the capacities of many of their regular clients. I have marvelled at the feats of pallid Indians coming home with their livers and just beginning to pick up. I have been staggered by the breakfasts of bronzed Australians from the Bush, who beat up mealy potatoes into their curry as preliminary to taking a canter for a round-up of all the other dishes. The curry, by the way, struck the sharp note of difference between the cuisines of the French and English companies. Both were excellent of their kind, but the English curry was substantial cutlets or fillets in a garniture of rice. On the French ship the rice was the dish ; it was a miracle of fine boiling and careful straining, and there was but the dressing of curry sauce, with a delicate infusion of lime juice. So all the dishes were more refined, as the wines were lighter, and if you hesitated before the meal there were the appétissants to tempt a sensitive appetite in shape of caviare, sardines, and olives. One might have

been very happy in those French boats if you could always have made sure of calm weather, but their captains often carried caution to excess. Once I shipped from Alexandria to Palermo in a Messageries boat, and had a spacious cabin and indeed pretty nearly the ship to myself. It blew a moderate breeze, and for three dreary days all the port-holes were hermetically sealed. Every morning, for almost the only time in my life, I woke up to the consciousness of a mephitic and pestiferous atmosphere. The breakfast could not tempt me, and I never rallied before night. For the last two days, like the mythical snipe, I lived on suction, for, happily, we had a store of fragrant oranges from the Delta. When we steamed in between the Concho d'Oro and the Monte Pellegrino, I was ashore in the first boat, making a rush for my friend Signor Ragusa and the familiar comforts of his Trinacria.

On the Italian boats, as a rule, the cooking was Italian and detestable : garlic, grease, and acids predominating ; nor were the wines much more conducive to excess than the turpentine vintages on the Gulf of Corinth. Even on Florio's lines from Naples to Sicily, which were about the best managed, the drink was generally indifferent Marsala and ale. The Marsala sent to the Italian markets was freely adulterated and heavily loaded. For that there was no excuse, and it was always a mystery why they did not give you

Capri or Lacrimæ Christi. Manners were easy on the Italian lines, the stewards were extravagantly complacent and always amenable to tips.

But for coarseness, roughness, and general discomfort commend me to the small, over-crowded Spanish steamers. Their hours of departure were as capricious as the times of arrival were doubtful. Your luggage was handed up after the inevitable squabble with the harbour boatmen, and you were handed over to the mercies of captain and mate who shrugged their shoulders significantly when you asked when they hoped to start. Comfort, cleanliness, or even common decency you could not expect. A grimy steward in shirt-sleeves welcomed you below to a stifling cabin. The cookery was supposed to be French, though the chef was unmistakably Spanish. There was no puchero of any of the genuine native dishes, excellent in their way. One dinner in particular I shall always remember, served on a lopsided, narrow-waisted screw, bound from Valencia for Barcelona. Flush-decked and with the lowest of rails, she rolled so portentously that when you risked a change of place your heart was in your mouth and your diaphragm inverted. It was poor preparation for the most enticing of meals, but when we adjourned into the deck-house, we found a *diner au diable*. The soup, with burned bread-

crusts swimming in lamp oil, gave warning of what was to follow.

Nevertheless, I might possibly have persevered, when a glance behind the scenes effectually choked me off. From my seat, through the open door, I commanded a view of the cook's galley. And there I saw a man who might have been taken for one of the stokers, rolling the rissoles in his greasy hands, before giving them the finishing touches in the frying-pan. After all, in these coasting boats, after having ridden over the byways and tried the ventas of the Peninsula, you did not hope for much and you were never agreeably disappointed. But I am bound to say my single experience of a Spanish sea-going liner was all that a reasonable man could desire. It was on the South American line, touching at the Canaries when homeward bound. I went in her from Cadiz to Malaga and was sorely tempted to prolong my voyage. Almost all her passengers had disembarked at Cadiz, and I was pretty nearly monarch of all I surveyed. A sumptuous table was served all the same, though that no doubt was for the sake of the courteous officers of the ship, who did everything to make things pleasant for the Englishmen. The Canary, Manzanilla, and light San Lucar were undeniable; there was snow-white linen and sparkling crystal, and the show of fruits and semi-tropical flowers might have taken high honours at any horti-

cultural exhibition. That pleasant sail from Cadiz recompensed me for a previous disappointment. The Guadalquivir, sung in Moorish ballads and Christian war-songs, had awakened innumerable sentimental fancies. I had dreamed of crystal waters under azure skies. I was somewhat disenchanted when I saw the turbid, yellow flood rolling under the arches of the long bridge leading to Triana, but all the same I resolved to see more of it, so one fine morning soon after a watery sunrise I boarded the Seville boat for Cadiz. The cockroaches had retired for the day, nor were the bugs in evidence, and one was content to compromise for the legions of fleas and a fair skirmishing force of mosquitos. But the scenery when we got beyond the Seville orange gardens—from which the Prince de Joinville drew a handsome revenue—was the saddest of all disillusionments.

Far as eye could see, the river shores were the abomination of desolation, and the sounds were the melancholy bellowing of herds of wild cattle and the plaintive cries of the water-fowl, scared by theplash of the paddles. The deep alluvial soil, if drained and reclaimed, might have borne abundant harvests; but there were neither villages nor solitary farmhouses, nor a sign of cultivation. Here and there was a herdsman's hut, wattled and thatched with the reeds from the Fenland, and when you did see a human

being the palsied wretch was as fever-stricken as any dweller in the Pontine Marshes or in the fertile Brazo valley of Texas. It was the very home of the ague : the shrine of the demons of the marsh fevers.



CHAPTER VII

THE OLD RIVIERA

LORD BROUGHAM must have the credit of discovering the Riviera. His erratic lordship in the course of his wanderings through law and letters, politics, science, and the Continent, when changing horses at the 'Post' at Cannes, fell in love with the place at sight, as his impulsive fashion was. He bought vineyards and oliveyards, and built the Villa Louise Eléonore, and laid out its gardens on an enchanting site. Cannes, with its one long street, was so little known at that time that it is not even marked on early maps in Murray. Lord Brougham with good reason became its tutelary deity, and memorials were raised to him in the public places. Lord Londesborough had erected a Gothic castle in questionable taste, other affluent Englishmen followed in due course ; then came the doctor, the parson, the English grocer, and the inevitable chemist. A colony of invalids soon settled at Cannes and very gradually colonised the most seductive of the townlets between the Isles of Hyères and the Gulf of Genoa.

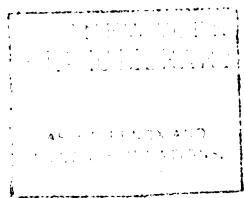
It must have been nearly fifty years ago when

I first made acquaintance with the Riviera, and then my descent upon it was involuntary. Our Messageries steamer had broken down in a storm between Marseilles and Leghorn, and we put into Antibes to wait there till another was sent to pick us up. To pass the time a mixed company chartered a string of nondescript vehicles and drove to Cannes. The single, interminable street much resembled that of Langen Schwalbach ; there were no hotels and but two inns or at most three. The landlords were driven to despair in catering for the wants of our hungry crowd. Needless to say what a sensation the arrival of that strange company excited. Cannes and the drowsy little port of Fréjus woke up, but the natives did not seem to realise that there was gain to be got out of the strangers. That was the general character of the life on the Riviera for years afterwards, before the romance vanished with the advent of the rail. Neither you nor anybody else was in a hurry. Indeed, the traveller could not well help himself, for he had only a choice of slow conveyances. I have taken the diligence and the vettura ; I have posted and I have gone at haphazard from stage to stage by patache, with jaded horses and spliced rope harness. Even when posting, though the postillion could go at a gallop on the flat, with an eye to the buena mano, it was often the more haste and the worse speed. You pressed hard

on the heels of the carriage before you and found no relay to carry you on. The diligence crawled as a matter of course : it went for hours or weary days on end, with merely precarious stoppages for meals, and unless you secured the coupé or banquette you were stifled, smothered in dust, smoke-dried, and impregnated with rank garlic. It picked up peasants en route, who smoked the foulest tobacco, and monks who may have paid the fare with benedictions, and undoubtedly seldom changed their raiment. But travelling by vettura was delightful, though its pace was little better. If you made your bargain, you could stop where you pleased at a fixed sum per diem, and you cast all financial cares on the shoulders of the vetturino. It was he who did the haggling with the landlords, and he was bound to do his best for you if he hoped for a satisfactory certificate in the book that was his best recommendation. More than once I have gone all the way from Pisa to Toulon, with a merry party of six or four, and once I travelled from Genoa to Nice in solitary state, when I was tempted on the steps of the Hôtel d'Italie by a return driver and a ridiculously low price. Though I had stipulated to keep his carriage to myself, he took it out of me by giving lifts on the road to the beneficed clergy and others, and the smiling rascal was so good-humoured with it all that you could not seriously quarrel with him.



*View from Balcony, Villa Falcone, Sorrento.
From a drawing by Mr. Shand*



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What pleasant old-time memories one has of these lumbering vettore, with the horses shrouded in netting and crowned with waving green boughs, like so many pilgrims bound for some shrine on Palm Sunday. The shrill monotony of their jingling bells lulled you to sleep, and you got used to the ceaseless barking of the cur who promenaded the dusty roof above the baggage.

The jangle of the bells and the warmth of the air would lull you to sleep, yet you always woke up with remorse and the feeling that you had probably missed something. Indeed that was pretty certain. The railway with its rapides and through tickets may be a convenience, but nobody now sees the Corniche to any purpose. A flying glimpse between wooded precipices down into some blue abyss, a fugitive glance at some gleaming promontory, and you burrow in the bowels of the rock, to emerge on some other tantalising illusion. In old days you need miss nothing and might dwell on the beauties that fascinated you. Here and there was a brief eclipse that was no unpleasant relief from the sun-glare and rather heightened prospective enjoyment. Perhaps the most glorious of all the views on that unrivalled road was that from the rock tunnel at Recco, looking down on Genova la Superba, with its palaced amphitheatre sloping down to the sea, and the undulating coast-line dying out in the distance.

There were drawbacks to that fashion of travel, but they only gave it something of the piquancy of adventure. On the more mountainous Riviera di Levanti, especially, there were rugged torrent beds running down to the sea. In the spring, with the melting of the snows and the heavy rains in the hills, bridges would be swept away and landslips would block the road. Coming back from Carnival at Rome in the solemn festivities of Easter week, you would find gangs of labourers lazily at work, and very likely blasting up massive boulders going forward. Careless of themselves, they seldom troubled to give warning, and once they sprang an awkward surprise on us, as the hare-brained Paddies on Walter Scott, when he was making his tour with Lockhart in the Green Isle. Flooding of those watercourses was common enough when streams shrunken to a thread in ordinary became absolutely impossible, and there was nothing for it but to turn back. Once we were condemned to spend three days in Chiavari, and we might have been in a worse place, for the inn was comfortable and the scenery superb. When floods or anything else upset your plans, that question of decent accommodation was always to the fore. On the eastern Corniche then the guide-books only characterised the best of the inns as 'clean and comfortable, with civil people'; most were indifferent and the worst were villainous. When you chanced to be

benighted for some reason near a pothouse or thatched trattina, only patronised by carriers and pedlars, as was the case in Calabria or Sicily, the walls and floors had to be scraped before you ventured to sit down to table. As for going to bed, one never dreamed of it. Yet the fare was generally far from bad, and the cooking creditable with slow fires and the Italian patience, if you could persuade the good people to eliminate the garlic. Very probably you may have been swindled, but in the more primitive establishments there was no possibility of grumbling at the bills. Indeed on those fertile slopes, in that balmy climate, with the difficulties of transport to profitable markets, the necessaries and not a few of the luxuries of life were to be had for next to nothing. The sea swarmed with mullets and sardines and other delicate fishes. In summer there were all sorts of fruits in abundance. And within a stage of the great city of Genoa I have drunk excellent white wine—I could not say as much for the red—at something under fourpence a bottle.

I don't know that any place on either Riviera was more attractive in early days than Spezzia. There was a peaceful beauty about the land-locked bay, a feeling of sensuous repose, tempered by the ripples of lazy life. The boatmen were no lotus-eaters ; they were stirred into rivalry by the appearance of a carriage, and would take you

anywhere on terms lowered by competition to any description of picturesque craft. There were boats of primitive build, and feluccas and speronares with their long spliced yards, slumpy masts, and brown latteen sails. There were weather-tanned seamen of smuggling cut, like the Jacopo who followed the fortunes of Monte Cristo, and skippers with long sheath-knives in their scarlet sashes, like the Sicilian navigator who went cruising with Dumas. Sailing in tiny craft never tempted me, and the passivity of boating always bored me unless there were trolling rods over the stern. Yet when we dawdled away the bright days at Spezzia or came back from a stiff climb among the hills, it was pleasant to take to the water with an armful of cushions to make you comfortable. Each long, leisurely stroke of the oars opened up some fresh charm, as the sun illuminated that Golden Horn in a blaze of dying splendour, or the moon showed her yellow disc above the sky-line. Who then foresaw the time when it would become a bustling pandemonium of labour, an arsenal, and the favourite anchorage of an Italian fleet ? Napoleon, the greatest of engineers and road-makers, in the climax of his conquests had not only dreamed of it as the naval station of his new empire, he had actually planned the docks and spent large sums on fortifications ; but the dream was baulked by the jealousy of Toulon. The environs were haunted by the

memories of Byron and Shelley, and of course we made the expedition to the beach of Lerici. The Croce di Malta, with its bow-windows and trim flower-beds, reminded me of coaching hostelries in rural Surrey and tempted to linger. Once when we had fancied ourselves rather pressed for time, and the dusty vettura had been run up the yard, we left it standing there through a succession of glorious days. Then there came a burst of a southern monsoon, and we moved on to be storm-stayed in worse quarters. The maidens of Spezzia were decidedly good-looking and they dressed smartly in the way of business. Each morning there was an open-air bazaar before the doors, where pedlars from Tuscany and Piedmont displayed their wares ; but the chief article of commerce was the coquettish little straw hats of the country, gaily adorned with artificial flowers. You had to buy them, and at least they had the advantage of being portable, for you could stow away a dozen or two in a hat-box.

To the westward of Genoa the Corniche changed its character. There was more civilised carriage traffic and infinitely more variety of animation. At any turn you might come across acquaintances. But between Mentone and Genoa there were few fixed settlements of English, and pensions had not sprung up around the posting inns and rare hotels. Pegli and Oneglia were in some senses suburbs of Genoa, whither Italian

nobles or wealthy merchants withdrew for the villeggiature, and for the most part to villas of their own. Still nearer the city was the much-frequented Albaro, where they showed you the villa Dickens had occupied, when he found to his disappointment that Byron's villa was in decay. Those old-world towns were dull enough, except on the main street that was the posting road or about the fishing-boats in the little harbour. But everywhere between was the constant flow of traffic. As the vettura with double-locked wheels descending some rapid gradient swung round a sharp corner, you might shave collision with an ox-wagon laden with blocks of marble, or get mixed up in a train of pack mules with the execrations of the excitable drivers. There were strings of village donkeys staggering between paniers of dung, and pedlars with their private asses, decked out like the mules of the Spanish Margaritos in gorgeous nets and trappings. There were knots of wiry labourers who had gathered together from the hills, stumping along in search of employment, the sort of fellows they have been turning since then into the light-footed bersaglieri. Good-humoured they generally were, though easily excited by drink. Knives might flash out in friendly fashion in a squabble over the strong red wine in some roadside trattoria where they were resting for the night. But in those days the Corniche was absolutely safe : you never

heard of some belated wayfarer being robbed or murdered on the high road between Monte Carlo and Nice.

The 'Corniche' was really a misnomer of the road which had been begun by the French as a military way and finished by the Sardinians. The real Corniche was the primitive mountain track, along which traffic had passed from time immemorial. Every here and there you came upon shreds and patches of it, climbing towards loftier altitudes and commanding more magnificent views. If you wandered in the Corniche, seductive as the false paths which led the pilgrims astray on the way to the Celestial City, you invariably came to grief and not unfrequently into actual danger. The footing was sure enough, but the ledge which had never admitted more than the passage of two laden beasts, sometimes narrowed to a yard or less in the face of some beetling precipices ; and after forcing your way through a fringe of aromatic shrubs, the next heedless step might drop you over a rock slide. Accidents were few, for the peasants knew the perils and avoided them, and as they said, none but Englishmen or idiots ever tempted the saints in these wild divagations.

Yet I often indulged in a somewhat milder sort of scrambling, when Monte Carlo was becoming the fashion, but before it had become the rage. For one thing I must always be grateful to

M. Blanc ; he gave me a luxurious base of operations for the exploration of the choicest scenery. When I first saw Monaco, after revelling in the far-reaching sea-views, I was only too glad to turn my back upon it. The streets of the Prince's little rock-perched eyrie were gloomy and filthy, as indeed they are now, and the only inn was detestable. Poor man, he could not help himself, for he was desperately pressed for pocket money ! Even before the Revolution that reft him of his capital of Mentone, his revenues were chiefly collected in kind, like 'the kain and carriages' of the poverty-stricken Scottish lairds, which meant tithes upon the poultry yard and corvée labour. No wonder he and M. Blanc came quickly to terms, with Satan as sleeping partner in the firm. Like all shrewd speculators, the Homburg exile did not stint the money. Getting the Prince under his thumb by splendid subsidies, he inaugurated the new dictatorship with unparalleled lavishness. When I went back to Monaco after his occupation, in place of toiling up a laborious path to the Palace Esplanade, I mounted by the easy gradients of a carriage drive, with seats at intervals and parapets embowered in bosquets of geranium like the battery of 'The Snake in the Grass' at Gibraltar. Where I had sat solitary before on the sheltered heights between the Riverine Alps and the azure sea, temples to the Goddess of Gain had sprung up,

like those of Pæstum or Suggestum, and terraces with statuary and sculptured fountains were shaded by palms and African carobs. I did not care much for those meretricious glories ; rouging the face of Nature had ruined her complexion. I never paid M. Blanc much in the way of tribute. But I did appreciate the comforts of his new Hôtel de Paris as a pied à terre. As at Baden when you were between the Kursaal and the Black Forest, there was a piquant contrast in the stiff scramble up the cliffs behind into rifts meandering through thickets of tangled shrubbery, to draw a long breath on the old Port Road—to follow up the ramble till you seated yourself under the plane tree on the plateau at Gorbio, then to dip down the valley on Mentone and return by train to the table d'hôte ! After dining on the delicacies of the season, you crossed to the Café de Paris for café and chaise, adjourning afterwards to the Casino to see the celebrities and rascality of Europe paraded before you. A single man need not be over-scrupulous, but the morality and society of the Paris disgusted me. I was grateful one year when I found refuge in the new and rather more remote Victoria, where the company was always relatively reputable and select. But alas ! hotels have been multiplied and villas springing up like mushrooms ; rocks have been blasted, shrubberies torn down, and from the most exquisite

points of view you may be barred out by bricks and mortar. Monte Carlo must always have the traces of her former beauty, but now it is the beauty of the demirep bedizened for the Bal de l'Opéra.

Ichabod : the glory or at least the pleasure is departed.

My associations with Mentone are mingled. When I first passed through it I rather think there was but one hotel and posting house which Murray praised as 'well managed.' The place struck me as an ideal dream of beauty, and so it is. Many years afterwards to my sorrow I spent a month there, arriving in rude health and soon feeling good for nothing. To be sure, owing to circumstances, I did not take my usual exercise, but the climate, especially in the Western Bay, was insidiously exhilarating. The society besides was far from exhilarating. It had become a favourite resort of the pulmonary invalids who had hitherto been exiled to Madeira or to Hyères, which was comparatively accessible from Marseilles. The first of the migrant flights had settled at Cannes, but from the searching winds and the sharp changes of temperature they had been moving on to the sheltered Mentone. Now it is the fashion to chill consumptives in refrigerators : then they were to be nursed and coddled in natural winter gardens with an atmosphere of semi-tropical palm houses. And all

along the Italian coast-line from Nice to Amalfi they could have found no more suitable spot than Mentone. Screened from 'a' the airts' with its amplification of mountain peaks, it tempts to lounging, donkey-riding, and bath-chairing. There the country, or rather the garden, comes up to the churchyard—sinisterly suggestive—and to the town, with no interludes of paved paths to climb, overshadowed by darksome stone-walls festooned with lichens and dripping with moisture. Now, as elsewhere, you get lost among villas and pensions. Then you stepped out on some thyme or heath covered steeps looking down into rifts torn in the tufa by volcanic forces, now glowing with golden oranges and clusters of the lemons, swaddled in green masses of the foliage of the fig, brightened up by the pink blossoms of the almonds. But the olive yielded the great harvest of the district, and where the sand mixed with the loam along the seashore the grey gnarled stems had attained to secular growth and offered magnificent studies for the artist. Amateurs in any numbers were to be seen sketching them, and the peasants not yet demoralised by tips of the tourist were very friendly. These olives rivalled those of Apulia or Calabria, but I cannot say much for the vines. It was a sore strain on civility when they pressed you to swallow their wine; if the air of Mentone was salubrious, there was no mistake about the medicinal qualities of the

vintages. When you made a peasant friend you kept him and had cordial greetings and warm handshakes in the street and the market. But there, as everywhere else in Italy, it was painful to see their treatment of the animals. Sitting on the esplanade of the Eastern Bay, a panorama of horrors was ever passing before you. The drays, overladen with massive blocks of stone, were dragged by galled jades whose sores were aggravated by thick blue fleeces, and though the wheels might be fast locked in the rutted sand, whips, goads, and execrations would urge them to try the impossible. Nor were the women more tender-hearted. In the apartment we hired we had engaged a most respectable cook and house-keeper—her cookery was detestable, though her marketing was above suspicion—and one day our lady's maid was drawn to the kitchen by pitiable screams. A rabbit was being skinned alive : there was nothing to be said except that it was the custom of the country. When I got thoroughly out of condition, I was sent for change of air up to S. Remo : then there was certainly only a single hotel there ; behind the street that was the post road was a filthy labyrinth of gloomy lanes. The change to the breezy air worked wonders, and in a week I was my own man again. And in those days, in those sequestered health-resorts you depended entirely on good air for good spirits : there was no gaiety, no lawn tennis,

no croquet, and a meeting of hermits and hypochondriacs was only occasionally celebrated by a scratch picnic with indifferent comestibles.

When I said Lord Brougham discovered the Riviera, I rather overshot the mark. The fair city of Nice was always well known to the travelling Briton, and English residents had given its name to the Promenade Anglaise. When I stopped there first, there were various comfortable hotels, but all were furnished in the solid, old-fashioned style of the Ship at Dover, the Clarendon or Morley's. Nice was then almost a Mentone on a much more extended scale. It broke back into picturesque country ; the romantic slopes of the Cimiez and the Montboron with their magnificent sea-views were blazing with beds of scarlet anemones and fragrant with the scent of flowering heaths and violets. You easily lost yourself in glades among the pine-woods, and might indulge, as I have done, in the amusement of bird-nesting. Then the railway came with the rush of winter residents. Fashionable hotels sprang up, and the hills were covered with pensions and villas. There was a land boom almost as sudden and as great as at the revival of Cologne. But unlike Cologne, there came a krach and a reaction. A Niçois in our consular service told me he was once persuaded in straitened circumstances to part with his family villa, greatly to his regret. Five years afterwards, having made some happy

hits, he bought it back for two-thirds of the money that had been given, the fact being that at Nice even more than at Cannes speculators and the newcomers had cut their own throats. They enclosed great spaces ; they swept woods away, and Nice like other industrial centres lost the better part of its rural attractions. Moreover, quieter folk and invalids came to shrink from scenes of dissipation. There was ruinous play at the clubs, and episodes in the riot of the carnival which reminded one of what we read of eighteenth-century Venice. The mediæval pageant seems to match with the venerable Corso at Rome, but it was out of place in the new and garish Avenue de la Gare. I chanced to be in Nice when the French troops were passing through, on their way to the war in Lombardy. The cession of Savoy and Nice brought some notable changes in the aspect of the Western Riviera. Before, the only signs of possible wars were the old 'Barbary Towers,' built to guard against descents when the African corsairs made these shores their happy hunting grounds. Sardinia had had no fear of an invasion in force by the Prince of Monaco with his army of thirty men. Now the Tête de Lion and the heights of Turbio were bristling with batteries to bar the road from Italy. The French Emperor could turn the key on the coast approach, though Cavour to his intense disgust had got the better of him in the mountain passes, where

under pretext of preserving Victor Emanuel's hunting grounds he had secured all the strong strategical points.

I have watched the rise and progress of Cannes with interest and sadness. The place has been overboomed, though not so much as Nice, and of course the building has been overdone. It has been stretching to the breadth and height, as well as to the length. With mountainous ascents behind and some three to four miles of sea-front, only the most robust can trust to their legs, and the more popular a man is in society the heavier his bill for carriage hire. Indeed I have always maintained that Cannes is no place for people who cannot afford a carriage of their own. You are never safe from winds blustering through the cross streets, and at sunset a searching breeze is pretty sure to sweep down from the Estrelle. Coming back somewhat belated from the afternoon drive, the hood of the barouche or landau is invaluable. Even more than at Nice there has been devastation of the woods, and the axe has been laid even more ruthlessly to the roots of the fir trees, especially since the annexation of the sunny slopes of Californie. Happily neither walls nor barbed wire nor stern warnings against trespass can spoil the glorious prospects. Were it only for the sake of one enchanting walk I should always stop at Cannes for a couple of nights. That walk is almost identical with

another above Malaga, for in both, following the course of a stone aqueduct along the face of the encircling amphitheatre of hills, you command the most superb panorama of land and sea, with the gleam of a great garden city brightening the foreground.



CHAPTER VIII

MANNERS

I.—DRESS

CLOTHES, said Carlyle, are the types of social institutions, and certainly dress is significant of manners. Now we think less of conventionalities than of comfort. In the daily obituary we read of the demise of a 'gentleman of the old school,' which the memorialist regretfully remarks is dying out. We recall the departed, as we remember him at the clubs and elsewhere, clean-shaven, benignant of aspect, deliberate of speech, courteous to all, and affable to his inferiors. Above all, we remember him by the precision of his dress, from the starched cravat and the slightly frilled shirt to the carefully polished shoe-leather. The costume was the outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual graces. He was a survival of the race who were laid to rest in the family vault beneath an inscription of many lines, recording good deeds and commemorating virtues. The old school is dying out, the old order is passing, with its formalities and punctilious observance of the conventionalities, and

one naturally asks Is the change for the better ? We incline to conservatism as the days go on, and I own myself laudator temporis acti ; but as for the clothes, I am free to confess that there is much to be said for more free-and-easy manners. I leave deductions to others, and merely note some memories of the past. One of the best and kindest friends of my boyhood was an ancient beau of the second quarter of the last century. He had lived fast, wrecked a fine fortune, and retired to a provincial town on a small annuity. Punctually, each Saturday, he would call at my preparatory school to take me out for a walk with a call at the pastrycook's, and we seldom parted without some trifling tip. Yet the pleasure was not all unmixed, for though his figure must have been familiar, the people would stare. His wear was a blue cutaway with brass buttons, a buff waistcoat the colour of yolks of eggs, white jean pantaloons, and buckled shoes. In rain or sunshine, mud or dust, he seemed to walk unspotted by the world. Above all, there was a well-brushed beaver hat, the only beaver I ever saw, to my knowledge. For the beavers had gone out before my time, the silk that might have been ' shined ' by Day and Martin had come in, and Lock, who still shows the old green shutters in St. James' Street, and Jupp were at the top of the trade. A silk hat was the most unwelcome present I ever had. It was a far cry from Eton to the

North, and when I was compelled to sport the new headpiece of a Sunday, like Rob of the charitable grinders in his shorts, I walked the streets like an early Christian martyr.

With the evolution of the new style came great industrial changes still in course of development. The Far West trappers carried their scalps back to the settlements, and the home hat trade came with a boom and a rush. The beaver had defied all weathers : the silk was ruined with one heavy shower, and suffered severely when taken on nocturnal rounds from Evans' or the Argyle to Vauxhall or Cremorne. And so the hatter flourished exceedingly, till felts and billycocks have been superseding the silken tile. Twenty or even half a score of years ago, if you went into the hall of one of the clubs in the season, there were nothing but the silks to be seen on the hat-pegs. Only here and there some literary or artistic light, sporting a slouch or a sombrero by way of advertisement, ventured to set the prejudices of society at defiance. Now, especially on wet days, the hall of the club is what would then have been regarded as a museum of eccentricities, and your hatter periodically sends touching appeals, reminding you that months have gone by since he was favoured with your orders. Again, if you turn to the columns of the 'Field,' or any of the smart journals, you will be tempted by all manner of attractive advertise-

ments of wrappers for shooting and fishing, riding, driving, and motoring. In my youth, when you were seated on the top of a coach you were happy in the possession of a tight-fitting Petersham, and the legs, unless you made friends with the guard, were left to look after themselves. The professional driving-coats alone seemed built for eternity, and I remember through a soaking day looking enviously into Captain Barclay's expanse of back as he coached his Defiance southwards. When he descended before the 'Salutation' at Perth he shook himself, and emerged 'dry as a toast.' I remember little about waterproofs, though Macintosh must then have patented an invention eminently suited to the misty country of his clan. The first of the tolerably satisfactory over-garments was the poncho imported from the Pampas, but soon to be superseded by the Highland adaptation of the Inverness cape. That was popular for a time, but in a blustering climate it was less suited to the free play of the limbs than the plaid of the hillman. I believe the last man who stuck to it was that staunch old Conservative, the late Mr. Markham Spofforth. For the invaluable frieze Ulster we were indebted to watery Ireland. But the most notable changes, and all for the better, have been in the costume for out-of-doors work of all kinds. Now I cannot conceive how, as Hotspur said, we 'scaped coughs and chills and rheumatic ailments when we shot

and fished or scaled Alpine mountains as we got drenched and dried again in the cotton shirt. It was a shock for the doctors, and a godsend to all who took to them, when flannels came in. In the clever illustrations to Scrope's 'Deer-stalking' and 'The Oakleigh Shooting Code,' we see stalkers and grouse-shooters in clinging coats and long, fashionably cut trousers, and sometimes with headgear that must have needed holding on. The Norfolk jacket, mined with capacious pockets, was a luxurious innovation before the breech-loader and the cartridge-belt came in. Then homespuns replaced broadcloth and the more flimsy tweeds; uncompromising leather leggings gave place to the flexible flax, and knickerbockers with knitted stockings let the damp drain off when you were tramping it through moor and morass. Boots of all sorts underwent a transformation. I never owned the Bluchers associated by Thackeray with Lord Brougham at Meurice's, but I remember my pride in a pair of Wellingtons, a modification of an exploded form of torture, involving untold troubles in packing.

Passing from the field to the drawing-room or the promenade, the toilette was infinitely more correct in those days, and fashion as to coats less flexible. The frock, even when cut by Poole, was all very well for the slim or the portly, but it did not suit all figures. It burlesqued the short stout man, who carried it off with a swagger.

On the other hand, great latitude was allowed in vests and linen. The double or triple waistcoat of various colours had disappeared, but fancy was permitted to run riot in Syrian dyes and curious embroidery. A broidered waistcoat was as common a gage d'amour as the presentation of worked slippers to a curate. And the fancy shirt-fronts of fine linen were in keeping, often with a pink or roseate underglow shining through transparent cambric. Young men were lavish of jewellery and fanciful in scents. They wore studs of diamond, pearl, and emerald ; they steeped their handkerchiefs for the dinner or the dance in the latest inventions of Piesse and Lubin. The old gentlemen still drew sixty-guinea watches with massive gold chains from deep fob pockets. Their juniors dangled collections of charms and lockets from slender Venetian chains attached to light Genevas, and the watch-snatchers had an easier if less lucrative time. When letters used to be sealed everybody wore a signet ring. With the adhesive envelope the necessity for the seal had gone by, but the old habit was still a fair excuse for displays which would now be condemned as the sure stamp of vulgarity. But one opening for ostentation was disappearing. I remember many an elderly gentleman who continued the traditions of the Petersfields and the Hertfords and was a connoisseur in snuff-boxes. When snuffing was

going out, smoking was coming in. Smoking led to the institution of the smoking-room in country houses, with the easy lounging dress of oriental fashion, donned when the ladies were supposed to have retired. And the loose smoking wear was the model of the very sensible dinner-jacket, admirably suited to the gourmet at a social gathering *en garçon*. On the other hand, we have become more correct of an evening at the clubs and much more extravagant. As I knew them first, in the younger establishments, it was the exception to change the morning dress, unless a man were going to a dance or reception. It may be partly owing to the multiplication of theatres, but now three-fourths of the golden youths are radiant in white ties and spotless cambric ; and as they are bound to dine up to their dress, they indulge in second-growth clarets or champagne in place of the bitter beer and the modest half-pint of sherry.

II.—DEPORTMENT

Deportment, as it used to be studied, is almost out of date. A Mr. Turveydrop of our time would seek in vain for such a model as he found in the Prince Regent. All recent changes, and they have been many, have tended to the relaxation of formality. We can associate deportment with the barouche, the chariot, or the

tilbury, but hardly with the motor-car or the bicycle. London is in closest touch with all corners of the country, and London more than ever gives the tone to social life. When I knew it first, there were spheres and circles to which the outsider could scarcely hope to penetrate unless he were making his mark in politics or letters, or for some reason were the fêted lion of the season. Even then the innermost doors were jealously closed, unless he were 'took up' as Lady Clavering said by one of two or three all-powerful patronesses, and then he had a general 'open sesame.' Then there might be scandals as to morals, but manners almost touched severity. Invited like the Tittlebat Titmouse of 'Ten Thousand a Year' to dine with an Earl of Dredlington, the parvenu was painfully conscious of preliminary tremors, and he was scarcely reassured by the affable courtesy of a host who ostentatiously respected himself in considering his guest. There was oppressive dignity in everything, from the solemn maître d'hôtel and the ancestral plate on the buffets to the massive epergnes and candelabra on the table. Such stiffness is next to impossible with the *dîner à la Russe*, with dishes carved on the sideboards, and with a perennial flow of champagne. There is a sense of sweetness and light ; the flowers favour tête-à-têtes, and the scents inspire flirtations. In the ceaseless whirl of new London life there is

an abundance for the most frivolous and brainless to chatter about. Three things have chiefly contributed to the changes—the facility of communications, the immigration of Americans, and the multiplication of fashionable hotels and restaurants. Formerly the member for the county or the wealthy squire would bring his family to town for a few weeks in the season, but the ladies had scarcely time to get acclimatised. Now they are at once caught up in the rush, and even if they only touch the fringes of Society with a capital S, may dissipate to their heart's content. For the M.P.s and their wives there are the official receptions : there are the operas and a wide choice of popular theatres : there are the suppers at the Ritz, the Carlton, or the Savoy, and late hours and light-hearted chaperons conduce to freedom of manners. Multi-millionaires with their lavish ostentation elbow aside the impoverished aristocracy, and the smart set ostentatiously prides itself on setting the old conventionalities at defiance.

The week-end with its scramble and whirl has played the mischief with antiquated fashions. The country house has changed to a caravanserai, where everyone can do what he pleases and call for what he likes. As I remember it, with much genuine hospitality, there was a certain solemnity about the country visit. The host felt bound to be at home to welcome the guest, did the honours

of the garden and covers from the first day, and kept him under kindly and close surveillance till he saw him into the carriage. There are still lingering traditions of the unremitting and embarrassing attentions for which Pleydell apologised to Colonel Manning, and the squire with the kindest intentions would bore his friend to death. At the periodical entertainments, a matter of debtor and creditor account between country neighbours, there was a ceremonious interchange of bows and scrapes. The arm played a great part in those simpler days both in drawing-room and street. Husband and wife would come in interlinked, heading a straggling procession of sons and daughters. And when the worthy countryfolk had an outing in town there were not only couples but triplets on the pavement, to the serious disarrangement of the traffic. White kid gloves, often bought cheap for the occasion, were in favour with gentlemen at formal dinners, and I have seen a shy man sorely embarrassed by endeavouring to hide the rents which gave glimpses of brown hands much more familiar with dogskins. The gentlemen of the older generation carried snuff-boxes and snuffed indefatigably. The graceful handling of the snuff-box was one of the tests of high-bred deportment. There was exquisite courtesy when with a preliminary tap on the lid and a smile and bow the boxes were interchanged. Sometimes the tender of a box with a genial

smile would smooth over a long-standing quarrel or warm a chilled friendship into life again. Public testimonials took the form of boxes in gold or silver, a custom which still survives in the City guilds. As snuff and spotless cambric were incompatible, the corollary of the snuff-box was the voluminous silken bandana with which paterfamilias would cover his face when indulging in forty winks in his family circle. In those days tail-coat pockets were worth picking when Artful Dodgers were abroad, and the fashion of wearing watches in fobs, with chains and bunches of seals to give a fair chance for a pull at them, was still more tempting to juvenile thieves. The white cravat, the blue coat with brass buttons, the silver snuff-box, and the fob chain were indispensable to the old family solicitor or to the medical practitioner who had the monopoly of aristocratic patronage. When universal smoking came in, it led inevitably to a relaxation of manners. The smoking-room became an institution in all well-regulated houses. It was not in human nature, when you had slipped out of evening dress and tight boots into smoking jackets, pyjamas, and oriental slippers, to stand on formalities with fellows whom otherwise you would have been inclined to keep at a distance. Exhilarated youth unbosomed itself over brandies and sodas, and not a little of the licence of the evening survived when men met again at the

breakfast table. Nothing is more significant of the lamentable progress of the radical revolution than its demoralising effect on the clubs. Those models of severe propriety were soon shaken to their foundations. I remember the scandal created in the New Club of Edinburgh by a democratic proposal to smoke in the drawing-room, which was seldom used after dinner. Three-lined whips were issued, and after an extraordinary muster of the members the subversive socialists, to the scandal of the veterans, nearly won the necessary two-thirds majority. It was only a postponement of the evil day. Men of science have always been addicted to tobacco and the pipe, but when I had the honour of election to the Athenæum the only smoking-room was a gloomy subterranean vault. Now it has the brightest and most spacious smoking-room in London, and there is a snug little retreat besides, cheek by jowl with the library. The Carlton is, of course, the headquarters of reaction, but in the Carlton you can light up in the hall and smoke out your cigar in the great library. Strange to say, the United Service is still somewhat behind the age, though even there the smokers have little to complain of, except the chance of being asphyxiated in their favourite atmosphere. And almost everywhere the vulgarity of the pipe is tolerated, though I had it hinted to me once in the smoking-room of the aristocratic old Whig

resort that it might be well to put my pipe in my pocket and try one of their brands of Havanas. Then the cigarette caught on, and ladies took to trifling with a vapid blend of paper and Latakia, and I hesitate to carry the subject further. But I incline to associate the coming of the cigarette with the slang which brothers and their friends have been teaching their mothers and sisters.

III.—CONVERSATION

Conversation is no longer cultivated as one of the fine arts. We talk in society, but we have ceased to converse, and perhaps are all the more lively for the change. A Johnson would be voted a stupendous bore ; we cannot conceive a man who prepared himself at all points for a meeting with a Lord Chancellor and who, much as he loved his friend Burke, always met him at the club as an adversary. The pace is too good for that sort of thing now ; men come to social gatherings to trifle and relax, with the feminine element fortunately in the ascendant. The most gifted raconteur, with the most tenacious memory, no longer shines at the dinner table unless he is brief and discreet. Macaulay with his rare flashes of silence would be 'scratched' by a brilliant latter-day hostess, and even Sydney Smith would be condemned to whisper his jokes to his neighbours. The professed wits have

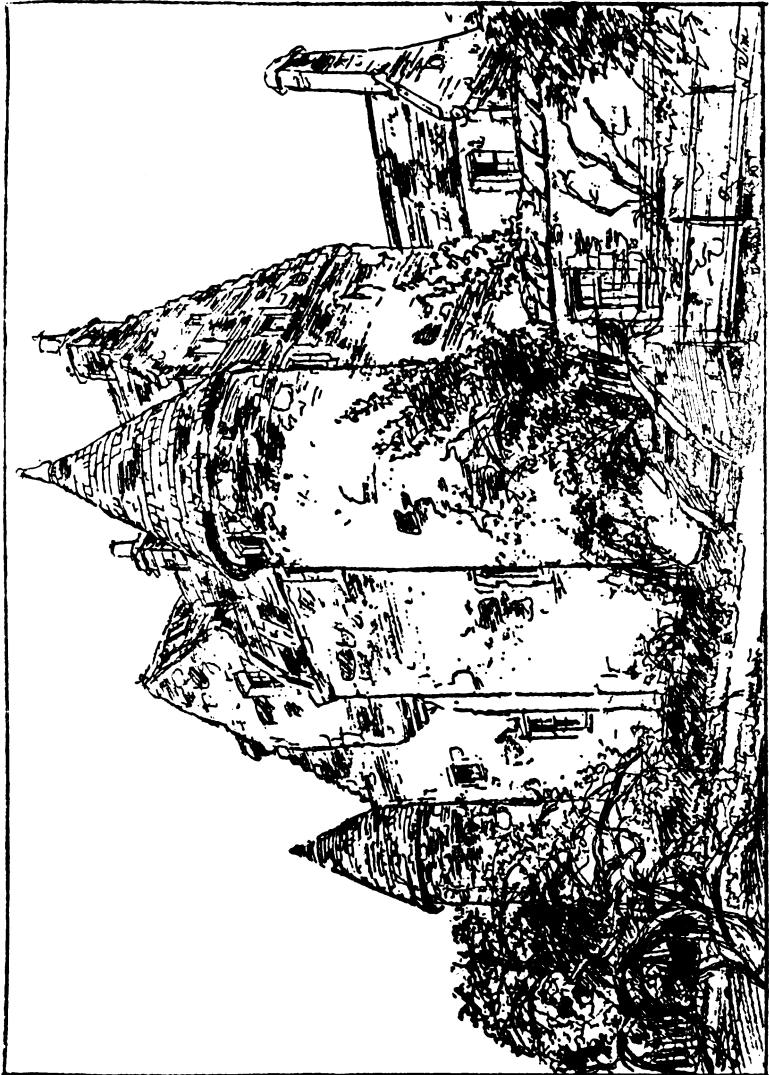
disappeared, and ready repartee is at a discount. There are clever men still, as there were brave men before Agamemnon, but they trade on their literary or political fame ; keep the best of their brains for their books or speeches, and seldom pull themselves together to sparkle in private. With the advent of the *dîner à la Russe*, prosy talkers no longer find civil listeners. The company has broken up into couples or groups, and autocracy has succumbed to a frivolous democracy. Gatherings for serious talk used to be something of a social mania. Not content with opportunities for showing off at dinner, when the glass gives a natural stimulus to intellect, the sages met over the tea-cups in societies for mutual admiration. The literary breakfast is dead as Samuel Rogers who originated it, and even Lord Houghton with all his bright cosmopolitanism and tact could scarcely strike sparks out of his matinal convives. I saw something of the last of these breakfasts and heard a great deal more, and the memories of the dying past were by no means exhilarating. Lively talk is a matter of impromptu, a game of battledore where the shuttlecock is kept flying and every outsider may cut in to take a hand. Far more inspiring than those matinal meetings, commemorated in sober diaries, are the vague traditions of such nights at Crockford's as when Caravan was made a hot favourite for the morrow's Derby, or better still,

the belated suppers with Fox at Brooks's when there was a fiery battle of the dice over the broiled bones after a prolonged debate in the Commons.

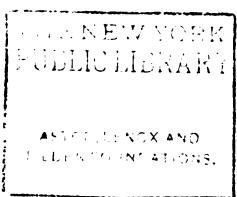
But it is to the credit of our modern manners that there is a decided improvement in the tone. I can remember some country hosts—there were not many of them—who gave a fair notion of the talk of a Squire Western. They had the discretion not to shock the ears of the ladies, but when the ladies had gone and the decanters circulated, a wise father would have wished his boys out of the room. Already the broad vein of conviviality that Sir Robert Walpole loved was reprobated and the double entente in the style of Sterne was embarrassing to many of the guests. There was a house where a neighbouring parson was a bosom friend of the squire—the reverend gentleman, like Bute Crawley, was an habitual diner-out—a sportsman of the old school like Jack Russell of the Exmoor country, he was devoted to Burgundy and the orthodox port. But though he seldom preached out of the pulpit he had his principles, and one evening when the squire had been coming it rather strong, as one of Marryat's heroes expressed it, it ended in a flare-up. The storm permanently cleared the air, and thenceforward the squire was a model of propriety. Such a scene would be almost impossible nowadays, and society generally has

been in course of reformation. We should hardly find a Captain Macmurdo now at the Knightsbridge barracks, and the veteran scapegrace who used to gloat over the scandals of his youth would find an unappreciative audience in the club smoking-room. The sentiment even among the fast men who went the pace would be disgust rather than admiration.

A propos of ready talkers, the most entertaining I have come across have been in the Church. I shall never forget a night drive on the roof of the northern mail between Inverness and Aberdeen. It was brilliant moonlight and the hoofs of the horses made merry music. Half the first stage had passed in silence, when a gentleman in a shovel hat on the box-seat woke up and began to discourse with the coachman. The flint struck fire, for the weather-beaten old whip was a humorist with an inexhaustible fund of reminiscence. The divine was put on his mettle and began to sparkle. Then he met his match in a grave Presbyterian minister behind, who lowered his muffler and cleared his throat. Mile after mile, chiming in with the rattle of the horses, these two went on capping anecdote and epigram, exchanging incidentally keen controversial thrusts, with tales of the churches in the South and the North, from bishops and synods down to clerks and precentors. The man of the manse may have had a trifle the best of it,



Guo's Garden, Shandong Province



but it was pretty nearly a dead heat, and the coachman came in by no means a bad third.

I think the tendency of former days was decidedly towards shop. That was almost a necessary consequence of the isolation of the remoter districts. The county was everything and the parish a great deal. There was no telegraph, and in the county paper, which came out once a week, there was a surfeit of local news. In the chat of the country house you might be happy enough for a day or two, but soon the entertainment staled. It was not that the gentlemen talked crops or bullocks as in Johnson's time, but they talked quarter sessions or county meetings and road trusts. Every scrap of local gossip was nuts to the ladies, and necessarily sympathies were parochial. I remember, for instance, that I was excited over the Egyptian war at the time of Arabi's revolt. None could surmise what the international complications might be. There was much sensation when the news of the war was announced one morning at breakfast. For the regiment of a new-fledged ensign was likely to be ordered out, and Jack was the son of a next-door neighbour. Then a little wit in the country went a long way. The man who had made a reputation as a local jester found everybody at table ready to laugh : he looked round for applause before he spoke, ignoring attempts at repartee, so there was no possibility

of keeping up the ball. With the greater stir of movement, with wider travel, winters abroad, and more lively amusements common to the sexes, there came less stagnation and more subjects of common interest. Golfing, lawn tennis, and all the rest of the games are a great advance on crawling round the croquet hoops and flirting languidly within earshot of everybody else. But even in other and more cultivated circles shop talk predominated just as much. At one time I was indebted for a good deal to the hospitality of one of the great colleges of Cambridge ; there were resident fellows distinguished in science and literature, and non-residents who had already made their mark in politics. I remember my disillusioning over the discourse in the Combination room, which ran on little save University affairs. The one exception was Fawcett, eager over the prospects of an impending dissolution and general election, and the blind politician was a living register of all open seats and the chances of candidates. I have read in novels and legal biographies of the humours of Bar heroes, but on the one occasion when I went circuit I saw nothing of them. It may have been much to their credit, but men's minds were running on cases and precedents ; they were pre-occupied with the hopes of any briefs that were going a-begging. But of all professional bores, so far as my limited experience goes, give me a

gathering of doctors. The dryness of the bones in the valley of vision is nothing to it, and they take it for granted with enthusiastic professional conviction that you are as passionately enamoured as themselves of eccentric malformations and the diagnosis of diseases. Once I chanced to meet on the margin of 'Zurich's fair water' a genial physician I had known at home. I was delighted to fall in with his proposal that we should dine together, though my hopes of a pleasant evening were slightly dashed when he told me a distinguished scientific colleague from the University was to make a third. The confrères talked brain all through that dreary dinner ; every now and then, when conscience pricked them, turning to ejaculate courteously, ' Intensely interesting, is it not ? ' My acquaintance never forgave me for a precipitate bolt before he and his friend settled down to coffee and cigars. Yet perhaps the doctors as bores might be scarcely in it with the sporting men absorbed in the Turf or the hunting field. They play variations on their solitary idea like Paganini on his single string. There used to be an idea that military men when they met at dinner talked nothing but pipeclay. There never was a greater delusion. I had a pretty wide experience of warriors at home and abroad before strict examinations had come into fashion and the higher scientific training was being ridden to death. And I would never wish

to be in better company than in those gatherings of men of the world, animated all alike with professional enthusiasm and spoiling for a fight, but as eager to make things pleasant for the guests and ready to talk anything rather than shop.



CHAPTER IX

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SQUIRE

THE squire and the parson, the farmer renting land and the yeoman proprietor, the labourer and the rural poor have seen strange vicissitudes in the last century and a half. The county itself has been transformed, though the rural revolution began at least a century before. The squire and his tenants and in a lesser degree his other neighbours have been the sport of the wheat market as it rose and fell. Taking the squire as the central figure of the social group, and noting the change of life and manners in all the classes, we are led into a course of miscellaneous reading at once instructive and entertaining. Grave contemporary historians had little to say on the subject, except in casual chapters on economical progress, as dry as barren statistics and compression of parliamentary reports could make them. It was left for Macaulay to discover that the real annalist of our national progress in civilisation and refinement was to be sought in sources hitherto considered beneath the dignity of the historian. He found the brightest materials

which gave history the charm of romance in the drama and in fiction where vraisemblance was made classical, in the diaries seldom intended for public edification, or the gossiping letters of the Selwyns and Horace Walpoles who took all that excited society for their province, from the Court to the coffee-house and from the Cabinet to the hazard table. These scandal-mongers, inspired by the genius for trivialities, had anticipated the society journals of to-day. In the eighteenth century the squire was the creature of his surroundings. As distinct from the greater nobility, inheritors of feudal traditions and monopolisers of church lands, lords lieutenants and monopolists of the rotten boroughs, the squires of moderate rental formed an aristocracy of their own. They stood by the order to which they belonged, as Sir Vavasour Firebrace believed in the baronetage before he saw his way to a coronet. But unlike Sir Vavasour they would not have exchanged their own rank for another. They were home-bred and home-tied, all their thoughts, pursuits, and affections were parochial as their prejudices. They seldom went to town except as knights of the shire, and there they foregathered in clubs of their own, generally talked Jacobitism behind their long clay pipes, and went to bed fuddled with strong March beer and the punchbowl. In their counties they claimed judicial rank as matter of course : they

were strenuous justices of the peace and punctual at quarter sessions. They administered justice from which there was seldom an appeal : arbitrary, but for the most part kindly. For the rude squire was in touch with his rough neighbours : he understood their wants and was inclined to gratify them. All he asked in return was the humble reverence, which was ungrudgingly given, for the villager was still something of a serf and the tenants rarely had leases. There was seldom trouble about trespass in those days, for paths were free, and from the Channel to the Cheviots there were few enclosures. There were no pheasant preserves, but the squire's pet aversion was the poacher, and the poacher had hard measure at his hands. By the irony of circumstances what first introduced Tom Jones to Squire Western was Tom's breaking bounds, and only by a rod or so, to relieve a wounded partridge.

The squire of the early eighteens as Fielding most graphically painted him was a strangely incongruous blend. He had the manners and coarse speech of one of his own ploughmen : his favourite oaths were offensive as those of the low Spaniard, perhaps the worst in the world. And they came so naturally as matter of habit that he never hesitated to shock feminine ears.

Nevertheless, he had a pride of birth, with a sense of family honour far keener than that of the polished courtier. The ladies of his family

had great liberty, for he seldom took the trouble to look after them, and indeed the temptations to indiscretion were few. If they chanced to abuse their freedom they did so at their peril. But the master was masterful, taking no thought of their hearts : he disposed of their hands at his will and pleasure, and a mésalliance was more unpardonable than a lapse from virtue, for the one affair might be huddled up and the other was published to the little local world. Squire Western was devoted to his daughter. ‘ Every day he grew fonder and fonder of her, insomuch that his beloved dogs almost gave place to her in his affections.’ Nevertheless, when he was firing Blifil upon her with violent objurgations, he gave her the alternative of promptly accepting the man of his choice or being cast out of the old manor house in the clothes she was wearing. And when Blifil is exposed and his predilections veer to Jones again, his orders for a change of front are just as peremptory.

Talking of the squire and his dogs suggests the rural pursuits that pre-occupied him. The squire of the time was his own bailiff-in-chief, the head forester and the head gamekeeper. As to farming, of course like everyone else, he kept in the ancient groove till the apostles of the new dispensation began to spread the light. But he had enough to do in looking after a multitudinous tenantry, in settling disputes among the

small copyholders and the village communities who practised primitive agriculture on co-operative principles. He punched the ribs of his bullocks who had lost flesh in the winter and were picking up again in the spring, and calculated the stone weight of his pigs with the judgment of a Parson Trulliber. But farm and forest business with the squire of easy means came second to amusements. The great thing was to get an appetite for the early dinner, so that he could gorge and drink with a clear conscience. Shufflebound or a hit at backgammon with the parson might be all very well for a hopeless day, but the squire set little store by weather. He had plenty of horses in his stable, sound, serviceable animals, rather coarse in the bone, but in those days hounds were slow as horses ; men did not go in for hard riding, but loved to see the pack puzzling out a cold scent. In fact, they were out and about with break of day, and roused the fox from his lair before he had digested supper and breakfast. When there were few enclosures there could have been little fencing, and with the many dykes and ditches water jumpers must have been most in request. The hunt can never have drawn the covers blank, for foxes swarmed and must often have been charged. But the squire and his cronies were [not] always particular : they hunted flick as well as fur, and the foxhounds turned harriers on occasion.

Indeed, as we are told by Lord Wilton in his 'Sports and Pursuits of the English,' it was not before the middle of the century that hounds were enticed solely to fox. Then every county gentleman had his couple or two, and when less affluent than Squire Western, they clubbed to make up a pack. And that kindly and sensible system prevailed down to the time of Cobbett's boyhood. Hearing of a meet when taking one of his 'rural rides' in Hampshire, that melancholy laudator temporis acti fondly recalls the days when there were some half-dozen packs within a comparatively limited radius.

It is little wonder the old squire seldom went to town: there were sentimental as well as material reasons that kept him in his county. Consequently, the more remote he was from what Cobbett called the Wen, the more [rude] were his tastes and the less civilised his manners. He had got a smattering of education in a country school, and had seldom had the polishing of a college education, for it was as much a flight of fancy when Western recalled his college frolics, as when 'mad Shallow' reminded Falstaff of their freaks when they heard the chimes at midnight. As Macaulay says, the squire's tutors were the keepers and stablemen, congenial spirits, whom he alternately petted and bullied often into a blind devotion, and Walter Besant hit one of those arrogant and capricious masters happily off in his

'Chaplain of the Fleet.' The order was strong in pride of birth, while professing contempt for peers and courtiers, and at the same time with a pervading sense of inferiority. 'I pity your town learning,' said Squire Western, 'I had rather be anything than a courtier and a Presbyterian and a Hanoverian,' when generously giving his daughter permission to love where she pleased, so long as she accepted the husband of his choice. In fact, those squires almost to a man were Jacobites theoretically, looking to France for any offchance of a successful revolution, while detesting Frenchmen and Londoners with equal cordiality. The identical feelings were strong with Squire Hazeldean, as Lord Lytton painted him a hundred years later. He hated foreigners of every breed : he was slow to get over his national prejudices with regard to his inoffensive tenant Riccabocca, and when urged to canvass Lassmere for his half-brother Egerton, he declared that 'he did not like for his own part appearing even in proxy as a lord's nominee.'

Fielding is roughly and intensely realistic. Smollett writing some years afterwards is more sentimental, and we suspect less reliable in his particulars. Matthew Bramble has seen something of the world, and is a man with a mind and shrewd perception of character. We suspect Smollett credited him with more intelligence and cultivation than he deserved by way of preparing

him for his introduction to his Scottish literati. Bramble is to be launched among the lights of the Modern Athens whom Smollett as a patriot intended to describe, and he holds his own with them. When he writes his graphically descriptive letters from London to Dr. Lewis he had seen London long before and can contrast the present with the past. But Smollett reverts to realities, and depicts again the home-bred and home-living squire with his heart in the ancestral hall and the lands that gave him everything except the vintages in his cellar. Had it not been for those restless womenfolk he would never care to leave it. His eulogy reminds us of Richard Jefferies. 'At Brambleton Hall I have elbow room within doors and breathe a clear, elastic, salutary air. . . . I drink the virgin lymph, pure and crystallic as it gushes from the rock, or the sparkling beverage, home brewed from malt of my own making : or I indulge in the cyder which my own orchard affords, or with claret of the best growth, imported for my own use : my bread is sweet and nourishing, made from my own wheat, ground in my own mill, and baked in my own oven : my table is furnished from my own ground : my five-year-old mutton, fed on the fragrant herbage of the mountains, that might vie with venison in price and flavour : my delicious veal, fattened with nothing but the mother's milk, that fills the dish with gravy : my poultry

from the barn door that never knew confinement except when they were at roost : my rabbits from the warren : my game fresh from the moors : my trout and salmon struggling from the stream : oysters from their native banks, and herrings with other sea-fish I can eat in four hours after they are taken.' And he goes on to dilate on the gardens and orchards which fatten his pigs as well as himself. It is a delightful idyllic picture which gladdens the soul of the uninitiated epicure, and goes far to account for the gout which sent Matthew to Bath and Harrogate. But even according to Smollett, all squires were not like Mr. Bramble, and he supplies an antidote to the rosy-coloured picture of a rural Paradise, in the account of the visits paid from Harrogate to two relatives of the house of Brambleton. If the one picture is idealised, those of Burdock and Pimpernel strike one as grotesque caricature.

Matthew Bramble must have had an estate of about 1,500*l.* a year. Smollett began writing about the middle of the century—'Peregrine Pickle' appeared in 1751—and precisely at that time we have a most trustworthy story of the life of a small Sussex squire in the *Life and Letters of Crabbe*. It is true that Irvell's income was little more than half that of Bramble, but in civilisation Suffolk and Norfolk were far in advance of the more northerly shires as of those on the wild Welsh marshes. Mr. Irvell said of

himself, with great truth, the Jack will never make a gentleman. He leased part of his estate and kept part in his own hands. He lived in an old moated grange, with a rockery, an ancient dovecot, and well-stocked fish-ponds. You entered a lofty hall, paved with black and white marble. There was a suite of public rooms in conformity, solidly furnished and hung with family portraits. Carefully kept up, they were never used save on such ceremonial occasions as marriages or funerals. The family lived in the kitchen, festooned with hams and flitches of bacon. The master had his great armchair in a corner of the vast open fireplace. ‘Mrs. Irvell sat at a small table, in which in the evening stood one small candle in an iron candlestick, plying her needle and surrounded by her busy maids.’ There they welcomed their familiar guests. ‘The house was a beehive,’ and Mrs. Irvell a Mrs. Poyser. At a very early hour the household was astir; if the first alarm failed it was succeeded by a more peremptory summons. Then Mrs. Poyser and Mrs. Irvell scolded straight on, ‘like bells in harness, inspiriting all the work, whether it was well or ill done.’ At twelve came dinner: ‘the family took their seats at an old table, with perchance some travelling rat-catcher or tinker or farrier: the maids sat at a side-table and a little farther off, and the farm-hands stood in the adjacent scullery.’ After-

wards came an hour's siesta, and then the work and bustle were resumed, while the squire sat with his friends, smoking, gossiping, and circulating the bottle.

We may have done Smollett some injustice in speaking of grotesque caricature: at least the caricature was of true characters, for the less objectionable of his Yorkshire squires pretended to high gentility. Pimpernel was an 'ungracious miscreant, whose house is the lively representation of a gaol.' His wife 'is really a good sort of woman, but she has not interest enough in her own house to command a draught of table beer, far less to bestow any sort of education on her children, who run about like rugged colts in a state of nature. For him, he is such a dirty fellow that I have not patience to prosecute the subject.'

The further from London, the rougher the manners and the more firmly was the smaller squire tethered to the soil. The scions of the wealthy aristocracy made a fashion of the grand tour in the parts of the continent that chanced to be peaceful. In charge of the tutor who looked for pluralities and promotion in the church, they went with the best introductions, mixed in good foreign society, and came back with some smattering of foreign tongues. Save in so far as it affected taxation and prices of corn and cattle, the small squire knew little of foreign

parts and cared less. In fact, had he not been ill-educated, listless, and unambitious, he had sound, practical reasons for staying at home. On his acres he was a little aristocrat : out of his parish he was nobody. Accustomed to being courted and toadied, he naturally did not love to be laughed at. Travel was costly, and he never changed a guinea when he could help it, and though he might pride himself on his rude hospitality, he looked closely even to shillings. Above all, the roads were execrable : the heaths and forests were infested with highwaymen, less gentle than Locksley of '*Ivanhoe*' and his merry men. The precincts of the metropolis swarmed with footpads, and the streets abounded with cozeners and rogues, laying perilous snares for the unsophisticated countryman. In Cornwall and Devon, in the wolds and dales of the far north, there were men of good birth, in affluent circumstances, who had never travelled beyond the nearest market town. Even so late as the second quarter of the nineteenth century, William Howitt gives some almost incredible examples of the acred barbarians who were vegetating in northern '*nooks of the world*.' And Howitt may be trusted as strictly veracious : he was no weaver of fiction, but described things as he saw them. In one of the nooks stood '*a goodly manor house*,' approached by a stately avenue of trees, and surrounded by what had once been

garden and pleasure grounds. The owner's landed estate was valued at from 30,000*l.* to 40,000*l.* But see the man himself! There he goes, a tall, hard-featured, weather-beaten man, dressed in the garb of the most rustic husbandman: strong-clouted made boots, ribbed worsted stockings, ordinary small clothes. A yellow striped waistcoat and a coat of coarse grey cloth: a hat that seems to have been originally made of coarse wool or dog's hair, brown, threadbare, and propped up behind his coat-collar. His three sons had never been sent to school, and they had grown up savages and drinkers. With all his insensibility he had begun to believe in an avenging Nemesis. Two of the three had married even beneath them: till they married all were working as labourers on the home farm, exchanging curses with the parent, who kept them up to the work like any slave-driver; and the one who remained at home as a bachelor never saw a shilling of pocket-money, but was permitted to sell an occasional truss of straw that he might pay for a pot of beer in the ale-house. And the old man who had passed his life in screwing and saving knew that all three were eagerly expecting his death that they might makes ducks and drakes of the expected inheritance.

A neighbour who might have lived in plenty was as confirmed a miser as Elwes or Daniel

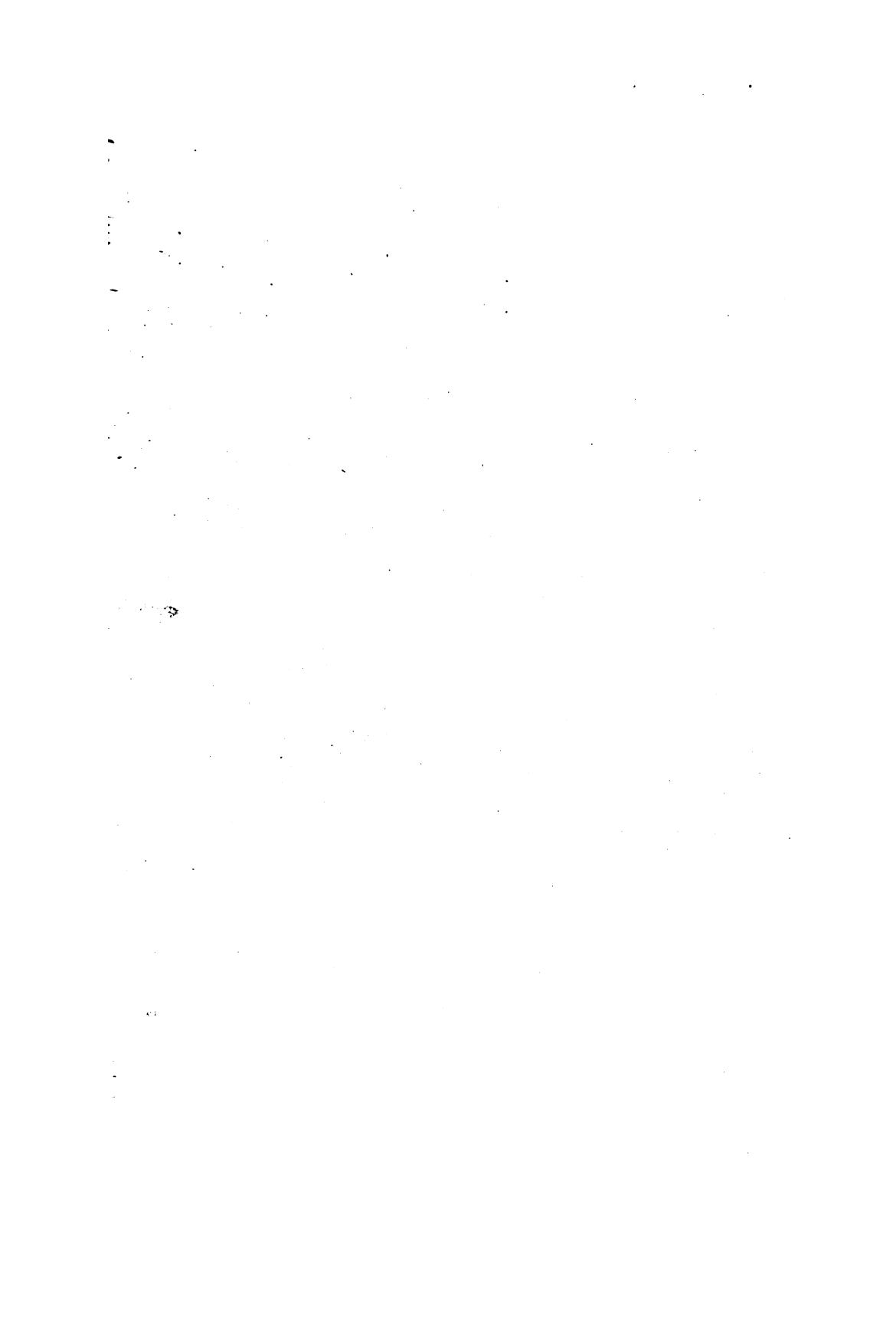
Dancer, those notable masters of the practice of saving, but he never indulged in Elwes' occasional freaks of generosity. He was as simple in his habits as Irvell, for his housekeeper, his solitary indoor servant, always sat at table with him. But though he had large landed estates, with an income that kept growing in arithmetical progression, all the year round he lived on Lenten fare, like any monk of the Chartreuse. Howitt tells of a land agent who called on business, and, unfortunately for himself, dropped in at the dinner hour, with an appetite sharpened by a long walk. He had to content himself with the quarter of a partridge, and when the housekeeper made a move to offer him the remaining morsel, the host courteously interposed, 'Don't urge Mr. Mapleson unpleasantly—don't overdo him—I daresay he knows when he has had enough, without so much teasing—I have had an excellent dinner indeed.' All the same, the old gentleman withdrew into a half-open cupboard, where he could be seen cutting into a plum cake and helping himself to a glass of wine. As we shall see, that wealthy landowner, with less excuse, only shared the dominating will of the northern dalesman. The further from town, the more absolute the isolation and the more deeply ingrained was the primitive barbarism. Lord Harvey, in a letter to Lady Mary Montague written in 1743, sums it up in a sentence. 'I

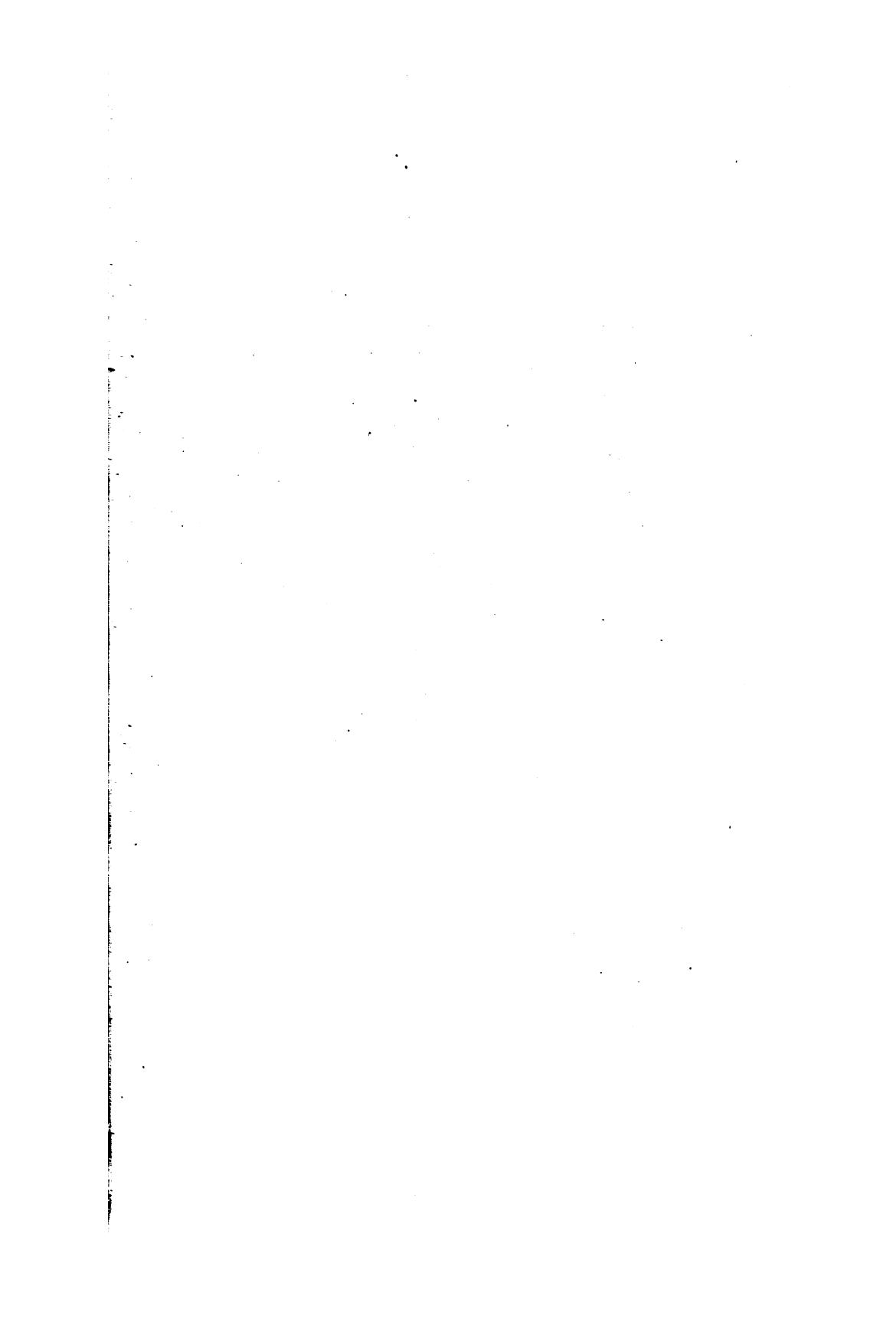
find the farther one goes from the capital, the more tedious the miles grow and the more rough and disagreeable the way.' No one of those unsophisticated and well-born boors ever dreamed of travelling for pleasure, in search of scenes which said nothing to him and of society with which he had nothing in common. The only exception was when, a martyr to gout or dyspepsia, he was persuaded by the apothecary to try Harrogate or Buxton. Then the old family coach, in which the poultry had occasionally roosted, was hauled out of the yard at the back of the mansion, and he set out to be smothered in clouds of dust or extricated from quagmires according to the weather.

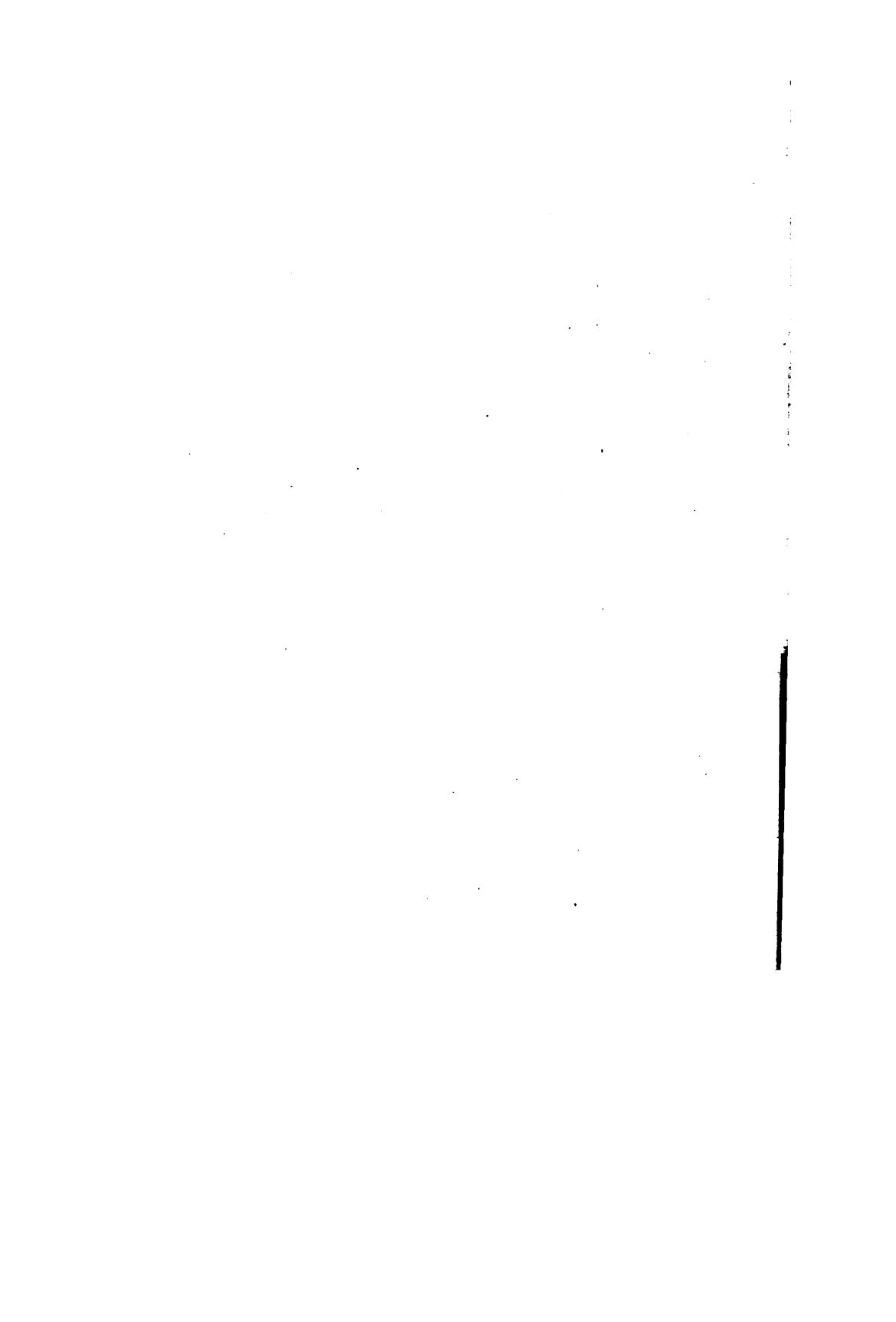
But as the years went on and roads were somewhat better looked after, especially in the midland and southern counties, when a turnpike act taxed the travellers at barriers which anticipated the toll-gates, when stage coaches accelerated their speed and began to make marvellous records, the squires were being humanised and their manners were softened. It is a long stride from Squire Western to Miss Austin's Sir John Middleton, though Middleton might have been Western with Western's environment. Sir John is a genial, jovial gentleman, bursting with good health, overflowing with hospitality, with slight tincture of letters, though he loves his newspaper, happily unconscious of his good-

natured mother-in-law's vulgarity, and absolutely destitute of tact. But wheat has been going up, rents have been rising, commons are being enclosed, and the squire is being taken to London by his lady who is already a highflyer at fashions.









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